

FROM THE LIBRARY
OF
H. L. TEVIS
AT ALMA

Thomas Lyscough Hedykinson.



O. J. 13. '22



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2020 with funding from
Getty Research Institute



"Do I look so very peculiar?"

THE GOLDEN KING.

Marye Good.

THE THEATRE.

A Monthly Review

OF

THE DRAMA, MUSIC, AND THE FINE ARTS.

EDITED BY

CLEMENT SCOTT.

NEW SERIES.

VOL. III. JANUARY TO JUNE, 1884.



LONDON:

DAVID BOGUE, 3, ST. MARTIN'S PLACE,
TRAFALGAR SQUARE.

1884.

[*All rights Reserved.*]

LIST OF PORTRAITS.

MISS MARY ANDERSON
MISS MINNIE PALMER
MISS AMY ROSELLE
MISS MARION HOOD
MRS. BEERBOHM-TREE
MISS LUCY BUCKSTONE

MR. HENRY IRVING
MR. W. H. KENDAL
MR. H. B. CONWAY
MR. EDGAR BRUCE
MR. LIONEL BROUGH
MR. FREDERICK LESLIE

INDEX.

	PAGE		PAGE
AMATEUR Performances :		" Claudian"	43, 219
Bell, Miss P., Benefit	166	in the Provinces	154
Busy Bees	115, 278	Coleridge as a Dramatist	135
Byron A. D. C.	163	" Comedy and Tragedy"	54, 143
Cambridge A. D. C.	57	Concerts in London	206
Carlton D. C.	54, 276	Conway, H. B., Biographical Sketch of	153
G. E. M.	59, 324	Conway, Hugh, and Comyns Carr, " Called Back"	314
Middlesex Rifles (19th)	170	Cook, Dutton, On the Stage	110
Moray Minstrels	324	Cook, Mrs. Dutton, Concert	321
Oxford Philothespians	56	" Cosaque, La"	250
Owl D. S.	168	Cowen, Miss, Dramatic Recital	325
Paulatim	163		
Romany A. D. C.	171	DALY, F., Henry Irving, Review of	326
Sunnyside Bee	223	Davenport, Fanny, Biographical Sketch of	164
Whittington D. C.	112	" Devotion"	309
Anderson, Mary, Biographical Sketch of	52	" Dick"	255
as Clarice	54, 143	Diderot, Paradox of Acting, Review of	117
as Galatea	48, 53	Dove (O.) and Alfred Maltby, " Three Hats"	83
Archer, W., on Didcrot's Paradox of Acting	117	Drew, Edwin, Benefit	169
Lords and Commons	I	Duval, Charles, " Odds and Ends"	114
Ash Wednesday, Why Theatres are Closed on	106		
Adams W. Davenport, Thespis En Route	293	EVENING, an, with the Marionettes	244
BACK-FALLS, by Godfrey Turner	67	FIRST Nights at the Play, by Clement Scott	61, 157
Bancroft, Marie, Thou bidst me live	184	Foyer of the Opera, the	8
Beatty-Kingston, W., Rossi on Hamlet	173		
" Beggar Student, The"	261	GALATEA OR PYGMALION RE-VERSED	85
Bismuth and Vermilion	194	Gallmeyer, Josephine, Death of	159
Boucicault, D., junior, " Devotion"	309	Gilbert, W. S., " Comedy and Tragedy"	54, 143
Bowie, A. G., The Story of Punch and Judy	17	" Palace of Truth," at the Prince's " Pygmalion and Galatea," at the Haymarket	88
" Breaking a Butterfly"	209	and Arthur Sullivan, " Princess Ida"	49
Brereton, A., Drama in New York	25	Glyn, Admiral, Death of	75
The First Cast of " The Rivals"	281	Golden Ring, The	171
Henry Irving, Review of	32		41
Browne, Lennox, Science and Singing, Review of	169	HAMLET, Rossi on	173
Bruce, Edgar, Biography of	223	Herman, H., and W. G. Wills, " Claudian"	43
Buckstone, Lucy, Biographical Sketch	322	Hervé, " Chilpéric," at the Empire	253
Burnand, F. C., " Camaralzaman"	144	Hervey, C., The Foyer of the Opera	8
" Paw Clawdian"	145	" Marie Dorval"	237
Byron, H. J., Death of	268	Hollingshead, John, and the Critics	51
" CALLED Back"	314	Howard, J. B., as Iago	280
Calls	291	Howells, W. D., " Yorick's Love"	258
Calthorp, C., An Evening with the Marionettes	245		
" Camaralzaman"	144	IMPRESSIONS of America, Henry Irving's	326
" Canterbury Pilgrims"	307	" Ironmaster, The"	263
Carl Rosa Opera Company	249	Irving, Henry, in America	57, 155, 217, 220
Ceylon, Theatricals in	325	Impressions of America	326
Chatterton, Extract from	326	A Biographical Sketch, Review of	32
Child, J. L., Recitals	169		
" Chilpéric"	252		

	PAGE
JAQUES, Pronunciation of	59
Jerrold, E., A French Stage Nursery	179
Jones, H. A., and H. Herman, "Breaking a Butterfly"	209
"Chatterton"	326
KELVIN, A., Recitations by	275
"LADY Clare," the Origin of the Plot	150
"Lady Macbeth," by M. Leigh Noel, Review	222
"Lalla Rookh"	322
Law, A., "A Mint of Money"	86
Leigh-Noel, M., "Lady Macbeth," Review of	222
Lennard, H., "Lalla Rookh"	322
Leslie, Frederick, Biographical Sketch of	323
"Little Carmen"	163
Litton, Marie, Death of	266
"Lords and Commons"	I
Lotta, Miss, as Musette	83
The Marchioness	84
"Low Water"	86
"MARGERY'S Lovers"	149
"Marie Dorval," by Charles Hervey	237
Mario, Anecdote of	99
Marsden, F., "Musette"	83
Matthews, J. B., Margery's Lovers	149
Meilhac, H., and Albert Millaud, "La Cosaque"	250
"Mam'zelle Nitouche"	312
Millöcker, C., "The Beggar Student"	261
"Mint, A, of Money"	86
Murray, Alfred, "Little Carmen"	163
Murray, A. and E. Jakobowski, "Dick"	255
"Musette"	83
Music, New	208
Musical Year, The	207
"NELL GWYNNE"	140
Nessler, V. E., "The Piper of Hamelin"	80
"New Magdalen" at the Novelty	115
Newton, Adelaide, First Appearance of	324
New York, Drama in	25
"Nita's First"	218
"Nitouche," Mam'zelle	312
Nursery, a French Stage	179
OPERA Season at Covent Garden	305
"PALACE of Truth," The	88
Palmer, Minnie, Biographical Sketch	104
Pantomime at Brighton	165
Paradox of Acting, by Diderot, Review of	117
"Paw Clawdian"	145
Pepys at the Play	201
"Peril" at the Haymarket	145
Pettitt, H., "The Spider's Web"	40
Pinero, A. W., "The Ironmaster"	263
"Low Water"	86
"Piper, The, of Hamelin"	80
Planquette, R. "Nell Gwynne"	140
Playgoers' Club	225
Poetry :	
Autumn Leaves	73
Céla Depend	60
Confitcor	172

Poetry—Continued.

	PAGE
Galatea	66
Interior, An	243
Le Voile	97
Love's Litany	116
Madge	193
Old Friends and New	134
One Day	50
Mizpah	149
Stage Heroine, A.	7
'Thou Bidst me Live	184
Three Kisses	82
To my Guardian Angel	303
Prince's Theatre, Opening of	88
"Princess Ida"	75
"Private Secretary, The"	278
Punch and Judy, The Story of	17
"Pygmalion and Galatea," at the Lyceum	49
READE, Charles, Death of	267
Reynolds, Sir Joshua, Exhibition of Paintings, by	108
"Rival's, The" First Performance of	222
First Cast of	281
At the Haymarket	311
Roselle, Amy, Biographical Sketch of	152
Rossi on Hamlet	173
Rowe S. and B. C. Stephenson, "Peril" at the Haymarket	145
Royal Academy, Pictures at	317
SALVINI at Covent Garden	215
Scenery, Dresses, and Decorations	126
Science and Singing, Review	169
Scott, Clement, First Nights at the Play	61
Sheridan, R. B., "The Rivals" at the Haymarket	311
Simpson, J. Palgrave, Snap	91
Sims, G. R., "The Golden Ring"	41
Smoking in Theatres	102
Snap	91
"Spider's Web," The	40
Stage Play, What is a	198
Stanford, V., "The Canterbury Pilgrims"	306
Stephens, H. P., "Galatea or Pygmalion Re-versed"	85
TAGLIONI, Madame, death of	318
Terriss, W., in America	55
Theatrical Crimes	165
Theatricals in Ceylon	325
Thespis En Route	295
"Three Hats"	83
Tragedy Queen, a	185
Trebelli, Madame, as Carmen	280
Turner, Godfrey, Back-falls	67
Bismuth and Vermilion	194
Calls	291
Scenery, Dresses, and Decorations	126
Show and its Value	227
VICARY, Miss H., Matinée	276
Von Moser, "The Private Secretary"	278
WARREN, "Nita's First"	218
What is a Stage Play?	198
Wigan, Mrs. Alfred, Death of	272
"YORICK'S LOVE"	258



"An ill-favour'd thing, Sir, but mine own."

AS YOU LIKE IT.

Lionel Brough

THE THEATRE.



The New Play at the Haymarket.

“LORDS AND COMMONS.”

BY WILLIAM ARCHER.

TO go back upon a play which has already been sufficiently discussed in all possible quarters may seem impertinent if not presumptuous. I have only two excuses : the request of the Editor of THE THEATRE, ever ready to give honest opinion a fair hearing, and the fact that no critic of “Lords and Commons” seems as yet to have examined into the extent of Mr. Pinero’s indebtedness to his Swedish original.

I am not sure that Mr. Pinero is at all “indebted” in any true sense to “*Mannen af Börd och Qvinnan af Folket*,” the long and intensely moral romance by Marie Sophie Schwartz, on which “Lords and Commons” is founded. Had he freed himself more completely from its influence, his play would have been better. It is one of those novels of romantic intrigue and situation, somewhat in Spielhagen’s earlier manner, which were so popular in Germany and Scandinavia about the middle of this century. The characters are always telling each other their interminable histories with a running comment of moral reflection. Much labour is devoted to preventing the intrigue from unravelling too fast, and the central secret is kept to the last with perverse ingenuity. Mr. Pinero has added little or nothing in the shape of plot, and has had to reject much. The main improbability of the problem, and the chief errors in its working out, he has borrowed from his original.

The play, like the novel, rests on two highly improbable assumptions. The first, and, to my mind, the more improbable of the two, is that a young nobleman in the nineteenth century should repudiate an innocent girl, and probably condemn his own family to extinction, merely because of her inferiority of birth. In Sweden

it may be possible. There a stronger feeling of caste attaches to nobility. Our nobles think of themselves, not as a caste, but as a class; their rank is to them a privilege and not a religion. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, we may presume that the Earl of Caryl had been to Eton and Cambridge. If so, he must have had a bad time of it, and it says more for his doggedness of character than for his common sense that he did not get "a good deal of the nonsense knocked out of him." He had no personal objection to the girl he had married; she was innocent of the deception practised upon him; nothing is said of any violent counter-attachment which might have explained his action; to repudiate her was to inflict a gross cruelty upon her and to lame his own life; yet rather than cloud the azure of the Caryl blood, he chose to let that priceless fluid altogether evaporate. Truly a strained assumption on which to found a drama of modern life. Mr. Pinero tries to lessen the strain by marking, as much as possible, his mother's influence over the young peer. This goes, indeed, some way towards explaining the difficulty. If such bigotry of caste exists anywhere, it is certainly among the female half of the upper ten thousand, and a domineering woman may exercise an enormous influence over a weak-minded man. But after all allowance has been made, the major premiss of the play remains a stumbling-block. Might it not have humanized and strengthened the motives of all concerned, to have made the wife an accomplice in the deception practised upon the young earl? We could then have sympathized in some measure with his conduct towards her, while her motive at the opening of the play would have been neither vengeance nor "the pangs of despised love," but a desire to make reparation, and, by gaining his esteem, to blot out the memory of her fault.

In the Swedish, the circumstances of the unhappy marriage are somewhat different. Count Romarhjerta is involved in an intrigue with a married woman, whose stepdaughter, Elin, secretly loves him. The husband is on the point of discovering his wife's guilt, when Elin, at the sacrifice of her own reputation, averts suspicion from her stepmother. The young Count is then forced, both by his own father and Elin's, to make her reparation by marrying her. He does so, and deserts her on the day of the marriage. Mr. Pinero has altered this, partly, no doubt, for the sake of simplicity, and partly so as to preserve his hero's moral

character. In doing so he has, if anything, lessened the second improbability—that of the husband failing to recognize his wife. According to him they had never met since their childhood, except on the single occasion of their marriage. Years, illness, and suffering have altered features of which the Earl could, at best, have but a faint recollection. If we can suppose it possible that Bassanio, in the trial-scene, should not recognize Portia, surely we may allow Mr. Pinero an infinitely less startling improbability. A recent dramatic sketch by Ouida turns on a similar assumption, as does her novel of “Held in Bondage;” but that is indeed no argument for its probability. A better precedent is furnished by Freytag’s powerful drama, “Graf Waldemar.” Playwrights, we must remember, have, from time immemorial, taxed our credulity in their premises, and justified themselves by the strength of their conclusion. Mr. Pinero does not ask us to believe an impossibility, but merely to accept an improbability, and here he is certainly within his rights.

The old Countess, in whom Mr. Pinero’s cynicism is held to have manifested itself unpleasantly, is a very mild version of her Swedish counterpart. The Grefvinna Romarhjerta is a wicked as well as an ill-bred old person, and Mr. Pinero has done well to cut away that portion of the intrigue, ingenious though it be, which springs from her past misdeeds. The tearing down of the Caryl escutcheon is a touch from the Swedish, but the substitution of the injured wife’s portrait is Mr. Pinero’s own invention. “Mrs. Stephenson,” in the original, induces Count Romarhjerta to accept a position as manager of one of her estates, but Mr. Pinero was perhaps scarcely wise in making this the fulcrum of the Earl of Caryl’s conversion, as the circumstances are at once too slightly motivated and too trivial. The burning of the cottage—a piece of reckless incendiarism on the author’s part—he also borrowed from the novel, along with several other details of minor importance. Lastly, a respect for his original, combined with the strange infirmity of moral judgment which has characterized almost all his plays, has led him into a fatal pitfall in the last scene of the drama. Lord Caryl has confessed his cruel folly in abandoning his wife, and declares that he would gladly make reparation to her, were it not that his heart is absorbed in a passion for the irresistible advocate who has pleaded her cause. This is at once the logical and the dramatically effective end of the play. The only rational

and possible thing for the conquering heroine to do is to declare her identity and throw herself into his arms. Instead of this she carries the masquerade a step further, from the sublime to the ridiculous. She first confesses her love for him, and then makes him vow never to see her again, but to devote his life to making amends to the woman he has injured. After a struggle the Earl consents, and actually goes to meet his wife and begin his life of hypocrisy with her. Only when she does not appear where he had been told to expect her, does it dawn upon him that he has been trifled with. The scene is what Mark Twain calls "romantic foolishness," a piece of the false idealism common in feminine fiction, and all the more out of place in the work of a notorious cynic like Mr. Pinero. That Mrs. Devenish should have thought of exacting this effort of so-called heroism is highly improbable, and the question whether the Earl should or should not have consented is a problem of difficult and purposeless casuistry with which the author has positively no right to trouble us. The play is over ; its problem is solved ; our interest is at an end. Why tag on the statement of another scarcely soluble enigma, whose solution we have not the smallest desire even to attempt ?

"Lords and Commons" has, unquestionably, faults enough and to spare ; yet I confess that I left the theatre on the first night with a feeling of pleasant exhilaration. The play seemed to me healthy and earnest in tone, entertaining in detail. The dialogue I thought admirable, the character sketches original, while it only needed a little closer playing to correct the dragging of one or two minor scenes. The audience, too, seemed to have shared my feeling. I was too far aloft to notice the antagonism of the stalls, and I can answer for the interest and amusement with which the unreserved parts of the house followed the performance. My surprise was great, then, on opening the next week's papers, to find it treated on all hands with ridicule, contempt or indignation. The plot was condemned as impossible, the characters were declared to be pasteboard puppets, either unreal or too realistic, and above all repulsive, while the tone of the play was denounced as cynical and even inhuman. The improbability of the plot I have admitted—let us now inquire a little into the other accusations.

A woman of fine character, but of low birth, is married to an arrogant and headstrong boy, who refuses to acknowledge the tie

between them. She determines to teach him, in spite of himself, her worth and his own folly, and to prevent the shipwreck of two lives. It is, fortunately, no ordinary task, and she uses no ordinary means. In the end she succeeds, and pride of birth gives place to love of worth. Is this idea cynical? Then Shakespeare was a cynic of the deepest dye; for in these words I have stated the motive, not of "Lords and Commons" only, but of "All's Well that Ends Well." The means by which Helena conquers Bertram, as even Mr. Dowden admits, "seem hardly to possess any moral force, any validity for the heart or the conscience;" compared with them the proceedings of Mrs. Devenish are rational, modest, womanly. Yet Coleridge calls Helena "the loveliest of Shakespeare's characters," while Mrs. Devenish, we are told, is at once impossible and repulsive. It seems to be assumed that she came to Caryl Court, with the intention of taking revenge by insulting and humiliating its owners, and that the reconciliation with Lord Caryl was an afterthought. Had this been her purpose, why should she so anxiously have maintained her incognito? If vulgar revenge was her motive, she should have blazoned abroad her identity, and thus given to the humiliation of the Caryls a treble sting. Unless I have greatly mistaken Mr. Pinero's intention, she, like Helena, has from the first a definite intention of reclaiming her husband, of playing Efigenia to his Cimone. The vengeance she intends is of the coals-of-fire description. In the Earl's pecuniary embarrassments she has seen her opportunity. Only by humiliation can such obstinate pride be cured. "Diseases, desperate grown, by desperate appliance are relieved, or not at all." She finds the Caryl family, like an oak overgrown with ivy, sickening under the burden of feudal prejudice. She lays the axe to the root of this poisonous overgrowth, but it can scarcely be said that she uses undue or unfeeling violence in tearing it away. To the Caryls, as human beings, she is gentle and considerate; and if she hurts their aristocratic feelings in proving to them that, believing themselves superhuman, they have merely succeeded in becoming inhuman, why, the fault is in the feelings and not in her. She respects their prejudices far more than they respect her claim to ordinary courtesy. And here again the accusation of cynicism comes in. We are told that the Caryl family are "unpleasant." So they are. If they were not the play would not exist. Its theme is the shattering of their

self-worship, and self-worship can never be a pleasant spectacle. They are regulating their life by a false ideal, and Mr. Pinero's cynicism merely lies in the touches by which he illustrates its falsity. Wrapped up in the privileges of their station, they have neglected its duties. The divinity which hedges them has shut them off from all human relations with their surroundings. Therefore the deputation from which the old countess expects a burst of "loyalty," shows no feeling but one of vulgar curiosity. Therefore the old steward, who has revelled in the privileges of feudal service, shows no conception of its duties—namely, gratitude and faithfulness. The author has, I admit, over-accentuated the insolence of his trio of aristocrats in the first act. They are, if not impossibly, at least unnecessarily, inhuman. But the deletion of a very few speeches would correct this fault, while it would make their subsequent conversion more of a development and less of a revolution. For the rest, though I hesitate to express such an opinion in the face of so great a cloud of witnesses to the contrary, the Countess of Caryl seems to me a finely drawn character, standing to the Marchioness in "Caste" in the relation of a portrait to a caricature. She strikes me as at once less conventional and less offensive. On questions of personal impression, however, it is useless to argue. Her brother, again, Lord Percy Lewiscourt, is a portrait whose accuracy no one denies, though many denounce it as a piece of cynical realism, extrinsic to the play, and in all respects inartistic. It is, indeed, extrinsic to the plot, but not to the theme of the play, if the distinction is permissible. Dealing with false nobility, Mr. Pinero shows its more specious aspects in the Caryl family, its baser side in Lord Percy Lewiscourt. He is a balancing complement to the social picture, and he is drawn with such richness of humour, and played, I may add, with such delicate skill, that there is nothing crude or harsh in the realism of the portrait. Miss Maplebeck is a freshly drawn, if not very novel, figure, and Tom Jervoise, if somewhat conventional and untrue, is at least amusing. In the part of Lady Nell the author has made the mistake of sketching a character too strongly in the first act, and filling it in too faintly in the sequel; but it is surely not cynical to show the frowardness and ill-breeding of an inexperienced girl softened by the influence of sorrow and love.

Critics for whom I have the greatest respect assure me that

they find "Lords and Commons" tedious. This silences debate, for no one can be argued into finding a play amusing. I can only say that I did not think it tedious, nor, apparently, did the majority of the audience. As for its cynicism, the accusation seems to me on a par with the old critical formula which docketed Thackeray as a cynic. Either the classification is false or cynic ceases to be a term of reproach. Folly and prejudice pitted against and vanquished by reason and enlightenment—this is surely no unpleasant or degrading spectacle. If the battle went the other way, then Mr. Pinero would indeed deserve to be called a pessimist. As it is, his theme is the old commonplace about hearts and coronets, simple faith and Norman blood, which has not hitherto been regarded as a cynical utterance. If, however, it be cynical to hint that there exists such a thing as a false and destructive ideal of rank, let him retrieve his character by drawing, what is quite within his power, a companion picture of true nobility.



A Stage Heroine.

"DOROTHY."

O MAID demure, how sweet the glow
 That fires us as you come and go !
 A vision bursting on the sight,
 You put all lesser things to flight :
 You're there—that's all we care to know !
 A little while—then comes a flow
 Of smiles, and you are lovely so :
 Your eyes are as a well of light,
 O maid demure !

And then fall sighs and tears ; and lo !
 Our hearts beat, aching at each blow
 That gives you pain ; we breathe aright
 Only when sunrise breaks the night,
 And, joys renewed, all griefs o'erthrow,
 O maid demure !

W. DAVENPORT ADAMS.

The Foyer of the Opera.

RUE LE PELETIER.

BY CHARLES HERVEY.

ANY one whose knowledge of Paris is of recent date, and who, strolling along the Boulevard, pauses to admire or criticize that imposing structure indebted for its existence to the combined exertions of an intelligent municipality and the architect Garnier—in other words, the Opera ; or, as Monselet, with a conciliatory deference to the susceptibilities of every possible *régime*, cautiously designates it the “ Académie—ale de musique,” would perhaps be surprised to learn that for a long series of years the lovers of melody and choregraphy had contentedly enjoyed them in an avowedly provisional locality, originally erected as a temporary make-shift in 1820. The theatre in question, the subject of the present paper, occupied a considerable space of ground between the Rue le Peletier and the Rue Grange Batelière, the carriage approach being by the first-named street, while the Passage de l’Opéra, in a side alley of which was the stage-door, afforded a sheltered access to the economical pedestrian. For more than half a century, until its destruction by fire in 1873, the Académie, successively “ royale,” “ nationale,” and “ impériale” de musique, maintained its artistic prestige, slowly but surely enriching its repertory with new masterpieces, interpreted by an *ensemble* of varied talent, such as we are not likely to see again. Financially speaking, it prospered or languished according to the ability or incompetency of its managers, from the Viscount Sosthènes de la Rochefoucauld, who philanthropically strove to improve the morals of the *danseuses* by lengthening their petticoats, to Messrs. Duponchel and Roqueplan, who made money by it, and M. Léon Pillet, who lost all he had. It weathered the evil days of 1830 and 1848, and contrived somehow or other to keep its doors open during the Commune ; but its star had then nearly set, and barely two years later the news fell upon the Parisians like a thunderbolt, that of the world-renowned *salle*, where Nourrit and Falcon had sung, and Taglioni and Elssler danced, nothing but the bare and crumbling walls remained.

Not even that Terpsichorean paradise, the "foyer de la danse," was spared ; that jealously guarded sanctuary where the dandies of the Restoration and the *gommeux* of the Empire had successively lounged, from Perpignan and Lautour Mezeray to Fernand de Montguyon and Gramont-Caderousse. Certain privileged members of the Jockey Club and diplomatic corps, with a sprinkling of influential journalists, were alone admitted into its precincts, and allowed to whisper soft nothings into the ear of Mdle. This or That, while she practised her *entrechats*, or indulged in a momentary repose on the semi-circular bench affixed to the wall. The room was large and lofty, but indifferently lit, and possessed no ornament save a marble bust of La Guimard, rather the worse for wear, on a wooden pedestal, and a range of mirrors reflecting the shapely forms and attitudes of "ces demoiselles," when, resting one foot on an iron rod, and standing on the other, they profited by the interval before "going on" to twist about like eels by way of imparting an extra pliancy and suppleness to their limbs. Naturally, ingress to the foyer was limited to the leading *danseuses*, the sisterhood of "rats" having no place therein ; these, on the contrary, when not chattering together like magpies in the bare and comfortless purgatories, by courtesy called dressing-rooms, provided for their accommodation, were ubiquitous in their habits, and roamed about here, there, and everywhere ; now audaciously penetrating into the coquettishly arranged *loge* of a "premier sujet," on the plea of soliciting its owner to take tickets in a lottery for some real or apocryphal charity, now waylaying some influential friend of the manager, in the hope that through his intercession the great object of their ambition, a "quart de pas" might one day fall to their share. One of the liveliest specimens of the genus, Sidonie Toussaint by name, was an incorrigible appropriator of any odd trifle she could lay her hand on ; and carried her acquisitions about with her in a capacious pocket worn underneath her stage dress. The contents of this receptacle, displayed one evening for the benefit of an admiring circle of her intimates, consisted, according to the testimony of a creditable witness, of the following very miscellaneous articles : half a lemon, a paper of snuff, two cakes of chocolate, three or four cigar ends, a scrap of Gruyère cheese, a cake of rose-coloured soap, tasting, she averred, *almost* like raspberry, a brioche, a live kitten a week or two old, and a pack of well-thumbed playing cards !

As far as I remember, the first opera I heard in this theatre (early in 1844) was Auber's "Philtre," sung by Levasseur, Massol and Mdlle. Nau; the first-named, who shortly after retired from the stage, had barely a shred of voice left, but managed the little he had with taste and skill. Massol was then, and during the remainder of his operatic career, a truly indispensable member of the company, the extraordinary compass of his voice enabling him to undertake both tenor and baritone parts, the latter often almost reaching to the bass; among those in which he peculiarly excelled were Pietro in "La Muette," and Ashton in "Lucia." About three years ago, when I happened to dine at a friend's house in Paris, one of the guests was the evergreen Massol, who in the course of the evening proved that time had not deteriorated his vocal powers, by singing the "Marseillaise" in a fashion calculated to test the solidity of our host's windows. As for Mdlle. Nau, a nice-looking creole, whose success at the Princess's Theatre in this same year 1844 may still be remembered, she had a sweet and remarkably flexible voice, well trained and admirably adapted to cope with the most florid roulades; but she went through her parts in so distressingly mechanical a manner, without an iota of sentiment or expression, that one imagined oneself listening to a "double" of Madame Dorus Gras.

The latter most estimable lady, indisputably the best "chanteuse légère" on the French stage since Madame Damoreau, and unrivalled in "Le Comte Ory," and similar productions of the Rossinian school, was singularly out of place where anything beyond a mere elementary knowledge of acting was required; however dramatic might be the situation, it failed to ruffle her composure, or impart to her gestures and demeanour the remotest semblance of animation. Alice in "Robert le Diable" was considered one of her most successful personations, and in it she took leave of the public in 1845. *Apropos* of this opera, I was once told on good authority that Meyerbeer, desirous of securing himself from interruption during its composition, hired a room in a remote quarter of the city; and transporting his piano thither, profited by the solitude to improvise sepulchral effects for the churchyard scene. Rumbling sounds of unearthly nature, issuing at dead of night from his chamber, so alarmed the awe-stricken concierge, that he and the equally timorous owner of the house, having made up their minds that the mysterious lodger must be either a coiner

or a conspirator, were on the point of signalling him to the kind attention of the police; when, fortunately for the supposed criminal, his task being satisfactorily completed, he and his manuscript disappeared together; and before the proprietor and Pipelet had fully realized their mistake, "Robert" was in active rehearsal at the Opera, and Levasseur hard at work studying the diabolical Bertram.

The real prima donna at this period was Rosine Stoltz, a most gifted artist and charming woman, possessor of a voice extending from soprano to contralto, and, barring a certain shrillness in the upper notes, excellent in tone. As a dramatic vocalist she had few equals and no superior, her acting being in every respect on a par with her singing, impulsive and energetic, and as free from conventional staginess as that of Madame Dorval herself. In "La Favorite," no one, not even Grisi, has ever approached her; "for," as the author of "Musical Recollections of the last Half-Century" justly remarks: "there was an *élan* about the method of the one which the other never touched, and which not one of her successors has ever realized." Since her retirement in 1847, I had altogether lost sight of her, and was somewhat astonished a few years ago on learning that she had just taken to herself a fourth husband, an amiable weakness which reminded me of a German actress, starring at Heidelberg during my stay in that town, who, profiting by the national facility for contracting and dissolving conjugal unions, had recently dismissed No. 5 in favour of No. 6, three of whose predecessors were still living at the time.

In most of her leading characters Madame Stoltz was admirably seconded by Barrsilhet, a thoroughly sterling artist, by many degrees the most accomplished baritone of his day; his voice, although slightly metallic in tone, was flexible, extensive, and sonorous in quality; and not even Faure, his only legitimate successor, has excelled him in taste or purity of style. He had a charming hôtel in the Rue de la Rochefoucauld, which, under his guidance, I once had an opportunity of visiting; in addition to a valuable picture gallery, the contents of which were subsequently dispersed by auction, it contained a spacious apartment fitted up for gymnastic exercises, and it was curious to see the Alphonse of "La Favorite" and the Charles VI. of Halévy's opera transformed for the nonce into an amateur Leotard, swarming up poles and swinging from rope to rope with the agility of a squirrel.

My recollections of Duprez date from the latter portion of his career, when little remained of the magnificent voice that had so often electrified the admirers of "Guillaume Tell" with its magical "Suivez-moi!" the few notes still unimpaired, however, were managed with such consummate skill as occasionally to excite the enthusiasm of his hearers, but the spectacle on the whole was a painful one. A favourite part in which I heard him was that of Eléazar in "La Juive," the Rachel being Madame Rossi Caccia, a tall, picturesque lady of the Helen McGregor type, whose shrill intonation grated unpleasantly on the ear, and who was as fond of displaying her remarkably well-shaped arms as Milly Costigan herself. Duprez was the owner of a very pretty hôtel in the Rue Turgot, and the way in which it came into his possession was singular enough. Happening, one day, to meet on the Boulevard the rich banker Aguado, Marquis de les Marismas, the latter, a great lover of music, stopped him, and in the course of conversation, remarked that he had half a mind to do a stroke of business with him.

"What kind of business, Marquis?" inquired Duprez.

"You shall see presently," was the reply. "You know my hôtel in the Rue Turgot?"

"Perfectly well."

"What do you think of it?"

"Nothing can be more delightful or in better taste."

"Very good; then listen to what I propose. The hôtel shall be yours in exchange for a certain annual sum, payable to me during my life."

"Excuse me, Marquis," objected Duprez; "I am somewhat superstitious, and——"

"You are nervous on my account," interrupted Aguado.

"Make your mind easy on that score; I never had a day's illness since I was born, and am just as likely to outlive you as not. Indeed, I shouldn't be surprised if, in the long run, you had to pay more than the hôtel is worth."

After a good deal of argument on both sides, the tenor at last consented, much against his will, to the proposed arrangement; and the amount of the yearly payment—a very moderate one—having been agreed upon, prepared to instal himself and household goods in his new abode. Two days later, M. de las Marismas started from Paris on his way to Madrid, and died suddenly before

arriving there, leaving Duprez the legitimate proprietor of a hôtel worth at least half a million of francs.

Another *habitué* of the Opera—when he could get in for nothing—was the Marquis d'Aligre, the most notorious miser in France or out of it. Many anecdotes are related of his penurious habits, the following being, perhaps, the most characteristic. After patiently enduring for some weeks the martyrdom of a violent toothache, he was at length compelled to have recourse to a dentist—the cheapest he could discover—who relieved him from his torture by extracting a stump in the last stage of decay. The operation concluded, M. d'Aligre, according to his wont, walked away without paying, and professed great surprise when, two months later, the dentist called at his hôtel, and politely reminded him of his debt, amounting to the modest sum of five francs.

"Five francs!" exclaimed the Marquis, apparently horror-struck; "my good man, I owe you nothing—not a farthing. On the contrary, it is you who owe me thirty sous."

"I don't understand," stammered the bewildered practitioner.

"You soon will, if you listen to me. The tooth you extracted the other day I left with you, did I not? Well, that very same tooth was stopped by you five years ago, and cost me six francs and a half—an enormous charge, to which I foolishly submitted, on your assuring me that the material used was gold leaf. What more do you want? You have the tooth, and the gold leaf ought to be still there; pay yourself with it, and *laissez-moi tranquille*."

In those days the ballet was marvellously well represented by Carlotta Grisi, Maria, the sisters Dumilâtre, and Adeline Plunkett. The first of these, by far the most poetical dancer the opera has seen since Taglioni, had every requisite for her art—beauty, grace, and comeliness of form; she was, moreover, especially fortunate in inspiring the authors of those choregraphic gems, "La Péri" and "Giselle." In the latter, the joint production of Théophile Gautier and Adolphe Adam, one of the chief attractions was a deliciously melodious waltz, which some old stagers may possibly remember; it became extremely popular both in and out of the theatre, was introduced into half a dozen vaudevilles, and occupied the place of honour in the barrel-organ repertory for at least a twelvemonth.

A dangerous rival to Carlotta would assuredly have proved Mdlle. Pauline Leroux, had she not unfortunately been compelled

by an accident to leave the stage shortly before my arrival in Paris. Last summer, however, I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of a very lively and agreeable old lady, the celebrated artist in question to wit, who, after gaining golden opinions by her graceful performance of "Le Diable Amoureux" five-and-forty years ago, had subsequently married the excellent actor, Lafont.

I never wish to see a better Fenella in "La Muette" than Mdlle. Maria, that cleverest and most eloquent of *mimes*; nor, if Auber's semi-opera, semi-ballet, "Le Dieu et la Bayadère," should ever be revived, could I desire a more bewitching representative of the heroine than Madame Doche's pretty sister, Adeline Plunkett. The latter's claim to pre-eminence was at one time disputed by Mdlle. Fuoco, or "Pointue," as she was called, from her favourite Terpsichorean feat of skimming about on the tips of her toes. This acrobatic accomplishment, however, soon palling on repetition, and people becoming more and more indifferent to its display, Mdlle "Pointue," who had no other string to her bow, wisely took the hint and retired from the arena, so that

"Le combat finit faute de combattants."

Of the two sisters Dumilâtre, Sophie, the eldest, was indisputably the best dancer, and Adèle the prettiest. Their father, an ex-tragic "confident" of the Théâtre Français, whenever their names chanced to be in the bills, was invariably to be found in the pit of the Opera, where, while preserving a modest incognito, he ingeniously contrived to impress those sitting near him with a favourable opinion of their talent.

"Can you tell me, Monsieur, the name of that charming danseuse?" he would say to his neighbour, in a tone expressive of great admiration.

"Mdlle. Sophie Dumilâtre," would be the natural answer.

"Indeed! how admirably she dances! what grace in every movement! She reminds me of Taglioni in her best days. And that tall, handsome girl beside her—who is she?"

"Her sister, Mdlle. Adèle Dumilâtre."

"You don't say so! How pretty she is! What an elegant figure!" and so on.

One evening, however, the occupant of the adjoining seat happened to be an old *habitué* of the Comédie Française, who

recognized at a glance the familiar features of the retired actor ; and, on the usual question being addressed to him, replied, in a voice sufficiently loud to be heard by those around him :

“Ma foi, père Dumilâtre, elle passe pour être votre fille, mais vous devez le savoir mieux que moi !”

The leading male dancers were Perrot and Petipa ; the first, by no means an Adonis, more than atoned for his unprepossessing exterior by his extraordinary lightness and agility. He married Carlotta Grisi, as ill-assorted an alliance as those of Boieldieu with the famous Clotilde, and of St. Léon with Fanny Cerito. Petipa, more favoured by Nature than his diminutive colleague, was in great request as a partner in a *pas de deux*. I remember seeing a clever caricature of him by Benjamin Roubaud, where he was represented with his legs wide apart, like the Colossus of Rhodes, and described as

“Monsieur *Petit-pas*, dans un *grand* !”

The Revolution of 1848 was a severe blow to the Opera, the receipts dwindling down almost to *nil*, and the pick of the company being successively dismissed by the management from sheer inability to pay their salaries. The principal authors and composers, unwilling to risk the fortunes of their bantlings at so unpropitious a moment, kept them snugly laid by until better times ; Clapisson alone boldly entering the lists with a somewhat heavy and lugubrious production, entitled “Jeanne la folle,” the heroine in which was personated by a young singer of promise, Mdlle. Masson. In order to leave no stone unturned towards a proper conception of the character, she paid a visit, accompanied by her mother, to the Salpêtrière, and was admitted into the presence of one of the “incurables,” who happened to be at dinner. Scarcely had they entered the cell when the patient, glaring at them furiously, seized hold of a basin of hot soup, and threw the contents with so good an aim at Madame Masson, that the poor lady, completely deluged with the scalding liquid, fainted away in the arms of the doctor who had escorted them, leaving her daughter to beat a retreat as best she could, radically cured of her fancy for studying madness from life.

A reaction came at last, and with it Meyerbeer and his “Prophète,” backed up by the engagements of Roger and Madame Viardot. Naturally, the sympathetic recruit from the Opéra Comique met with a hearty reception, and, aided by the best

Fidès the world has ever heard or is likely to hear, gallantly inaugurated what at first promised to be a long and brilliant career ; his voice, however, ill calculated to battle with the overpowering orchestra, soon lost its freshness, and although during the remainder of his stay at the Opera, especially in "Lucia" and Auber's "Enfant Prodigue," he increased, if possible, his reputation as an actor, he never entirely recovered his former prestige as a singer.

At different periods, but with equally profitable results to the treasury, the trio of Graces—Cerito, Rosati, and Ferraris—favoured us in turn with a taste of their quality ; the first (supported by St. Léon in his double capacity of dancer and fiddler) in the "Violon du Diable," the second in "Le Corsaire," and the third in "Les Elfes." Hardly so fortunate—with the exception of Mdlle. Cruvelli, who made a hit in "Les Vêpres Siciliennes," and invariably brought down the house when she chose to exert herself, which wasn't often—were the exotic "Queens of Song," who successively figured in the bills of the (then) Académie Impériale, Angiolina Bosio's charming voice was lost amid the soporific gloom of "Louise Miller," Madame Borghi Mamo struggled heroically; but ineffectually, against the dreariness of Halévy's "Magicienne," while not even Alboni could impart vitality to that musical dead-weight "La Corbeille d'Oranges." As for poor Madame Tedesco, the Venus of the fore-doomed "Tannhäuser," hers were the hardest lines of all ; and I may be excused from alluding further to a disgraceful episode in the history of this theatre, on which I do not care to dwell.

" Sur les noires couleurs d'un si triste tableau
Il faut passer l'éponge, ou tirer le rideau !"

Far pleasanter would it be to record the triumphs of that sterling artist, Madame Gueymard, of bright, intelligent Marie Sass, and of my own especial favourite, Christine Nilsson ; but I have already overtaxed the indulgence of my readers, and can only hope to atone for my prolixity by winding up with an anecdote which may perhaps be new to them.

Shortly after the late Prince Poniatowski, possibly by way of consolation for the very moderate success obtained by his "Pierre de Médicis" at the Opera, had been nominated a member of the Senate, Auber, who was somewhat sceptical with regard to the

Prince's musical attainments, and utterly ignored him as a dramatic composer, received from him a note, beginning "My dear colleague."

"Colleague," said the author of "*La Muette*" in real or affected astonishment, "what can he mean by 'colleague?'—unless, indeed," he added after a moment's reflection, "they have made me a Senator without my knowing it!"



The Story of Punch and Judy.

BY ARCHIBALD GRANGER BOWIE.

IT would be a somewhat difficult task to account for the strange fascination which the ever-famous street drama, "Punch and Judy," seems to exercise over its patrons. That the Royal show should form a perennial source of amusement to the younger generation is not, of course, to be surprised at. It is probably, to most children, their first experience of a stage-play, and it can be readily imagined how keenly they enjoy the movements of the grotesque figures and the rough horse-play of which the drama now mainly consists. But it is certainly not a little remarkable that it should retain its charm for children of a larger growth; yet who can honestly repudiate the possession of a lurking feeling of pleasure in seeing the performance of "Punch and Judy?" Whatever may be the secret of the charm, which Punch has thus wielded to much good purpose (as regards his proprietors at least) ever since he first exhibited his familiar features in this country, there can be no doubt of its potency. We have it on reliable authority that on a night of important debate, Mr. Windham, a Secretary of State, paused, like a truant schoolboy, on his way from Downing Street to the House of Commons, until the whole performance of a "Punch and Judy" was concluded, in order to enjoy a hearty laugh at the whimsicalities of the motley hero. Who, after this, need blush to find himself powerless to resist the attractions of Mr. Punch and his merry fellow-puppets. In those bygone days, however, people

appear to have been less artificial in their tastes than they now are, and, if the truth be told, probably Mr. Secretary Windham was not in the least ashamed to own to his little weakness, the story of which has been handed down to posterity. Mr. Albert Smith goes so far indeed as to openly avow in a public print called the *Mirror*, in 1847, that he was "never ashamed of being caught gazing at Punch." Perhaps it should be remembered that "Punch and Judy" was then altogether a much cleverer performance than it is now, and that there really was something like wit and humour in the dialogue of those days, circumstances which go far to explain the attractions of the show in the past.

It is not difficult to guess that Italy, a land ever famous for mummers and mumming, is the country of Punch's birth, but it is not quite so easy to determine to what particular circumstance he owes his origin. Some are inclined to take a somewhat Scriptural view of the case, referring the origin to a "corruption, both in word and deed, of *Pontius cum Judacis*, one of the old mysteries." A correspondent in an old number of *Notes and Queries*, who supports this theory, infers Poncinello, Punch's name in Italy, to be a very easy corruption of Pontiello, or Pontianello, and Judy to be from Giudei (the Jew), or Giada (Judas). Traditions of Pontius Pilate were of course afloat in the Middle Ages, and were probably embodied in a mystery play. "There was hardly an old play," Theobald tells us in one of his notes to Shakespeare, "till the period of the Reformation, which had not in it a devil and a droll character, who was to play upon and work the devil," and from this the *Notes and Queries'* correspondent concludes that perhaps Judas was often introduced as a fit representative; and so in our street exhibitions we generally see both characters introduced (Judas corrupted into Judy) and Punch victorious over both. Strutt regards Punch as the genuine descendant of the Iniquity in the old moralities. When regular stage-plays began to be produced and proper theatres established, the old secular plays, consisting of a medley of different performances—calculated chiefly to promote mirth without any view to instruction—as well as the old form of mysteries, miracles and moralities, rapidly declined, and soon only were relished by the vulgar. The law set her face against the secular plays, and the strolling actors by whom they were performed became stigmatized as rogues and vagabonds, and were denied all access to the houses

of the opulent. The tragitour, as Strutt remarks in his "Sports and Pastimes," became a mere juggler, and played a few paltry tricks, occasionally assisted by the bourdour or jester, transformed into a modern Jack Pudding, and it is highly probable, considers this old writer on sporting antiquities, that necessity suggested to the unfortunate tragitour the idea of supplying the place of his human confederates by automaton figures made of wood, which, by means of wires properly attached to them, were moved about, and performed many of the actions peculiar to mankind. In such performances, adds Strutt, "a facetious performer, well known by the name of Punchinello, supplied the place of the Vice or mirth-maker, a favourite character in the moralities. In modern days this celebrated actor, who has something to say to the greater part of his auditory, is called plain Punch." But this does not solve the problem regarding the origin of Punch, for, after all, Strutt only shows us how he was borrowed by the strolling showmen for the purposes of their puppet plays. In Italy "Punch and Judy," as now played, has existed over three hundred years, and the true and original Punch may, we are inclined to think, be traced to Naples or its neighbourhood. Galiani, in his "Vocabulary of the Neapolitan Dialect," fixes on Puccio d'Aniello, at Acerro, near Naples, as Punch's original, and after his death a Polecenella, or young Puccio, succeeded him. Capponi, and other Italian writers, regard Punch as a lineal representative of the Atelian frontiers, finding a convincing resemblance between his mask and a little chicken-nosed figure in bronze which was discovered at Rome, from whose nose they derive the name "a pulliceno pullicenella." Forsyth, in an interesting note on the subject in the second volume of his work on Italy, considers that we might push the origin of Punch back to very remote antiquity. "Punch," he says, "is a native of Atella, and, therefore, an Oscan. Now the Oscan farces were anterior to any stage. They intruded on the stage only in its barbarous state, and were dismissed on the first appearance of a regular drama. They then appeared as *Exodia* on trestles; their mummers spoke broad Volscan; whatever they spoke they grimaced like Datus; they retailed all the scandal that passed, as poor Mallonia's wrongs; their parts were frequently interwoven with other dramas, and in all these respects the *Exodiarius* corresponds with the Punch of Naples." Returning from analogy to fact, the same writer observes that, after all,

"Master Punch is only a caricature of the Apulian peasant, a character invented, as some suppose, by the Captain Mattamoros, improved by Cincio, the tailor, and performing the same part as the Fool or the Vice in our English plays and moralities," whence, no doubt, we may add, he was borrowed by Strutt's *tragitour*. On the whole, as will be seen, the evidence is conflicting as to Punch's true origin, and, after all, the point can hardly be considered one of very material importance. Whatever may be the truth of the case, it is beyond doubt that the "Punch and Judy" which we now know, came from Italy. It is said to have been written by one Silvio Florillo about the year 1600, and was introduced into this country nearly a hundred years ago by one Piccini, known by his successors as Porsini, and the reputed father of those who play on barrel organs.

There was, however a kind of Punch known here, previous to Piccini's time, which attained such fame as to rival the opera at the Haymarket. The *Spectator*, of March 16, 1710, refers to both performances as being the chief diversions of the town, and owns to a preference for Mr. Powell's puppet-drama. Powell was a famous puppet-showman, who has been immortalized both in the *Spectator*, and by Steele in the *Tatler*, and exhibited his wooden heroes under the little Piazza in Covent Garden, opposite to St. Paul's Church. In a letter in the number of the *Spectator* alluded to, supposed to emanate from the Sexton, but attributed to Steele, complaint is made that the performances of Punch thinned the congregation in the Church, and that as Powell exhibited during the time of prayer, the tolling of the bell was taken by all who heard it for notice of the commencement of the exhibition. Punch is also the subject of discussion in the *Tatler*. In No. 44, Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., complains of having been abused in a prologue supposed to be spoken by Punch, but really delivered by his master, who stood behind, "worked the wires," and by "a thread in one of Punch's chops," gave to him the appearance of animation. In No. 50 of the *Tatler*, appears a real or supposed reply from the showman himself, insisting on his right of control over his own puppets, and denying all knowledge of the "original of puppet-shows, and the several changes and revolutions that have happened in them since Thespis." A subsequent No. (115) tells us that Punch was so attractive, particularly with the ladies, as to cause the opera and Nicolini to be deserted. Punch

had then, as now, "a scolding wife," and was attended besides by a number of courtiers and nobles. But there is mention of Punchinello in this country long before this, even. In the overseers' books of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, four entries in 1666 and 1667 appear as follows: "Rec. of Punchinello, y^e Italian popet player, for his booth at Charing-cross," the sums ranging from £2 12s. 6d. to £1 2s. 6d., which is probably the earliest notice of Punch in England. Another early reference is that made by Granger, who, speaking of one Philips, a noted merry-andrew in the reign of James II., says, "this man was some time fiddler to a puppet-show, in which capacity he held many a dialogue with *Punch* in much the same strain as he did afterwards with the mountebank doctor, his master, upon the stage." Gay, in his *Shepherd's Week* (Saturday), distinguishes between the tricks of "Jack Pudding, in his parti-coloured jacket," and "Punch's feats," adding that they were both known at rustic wakes and fairs. At St. Bartholomew's Fair, Smithfield, Punch used always to take a prominent part, as we gather from *Hudibras Redivivus*, 1707, in the lines—

"Where Punchinelloes, popes, and devils
Are by authority allowed,
To please the giddy, gaping crowd."

It was not, however, till the early years of the eighteenth century that Punch became actually and completely established in this country, and it was not until very much later that the present version became known through Piccini's performances. This exhibitor seems to have made good business out of his show, for we are told by Henry Mayhew, that he would draw sometimes as much as £10 a day. Nevertheless, he died a pauper in St. Giles' Workhouse.

The play in which Punch figures so prominently, cannot be said to have ever possessed any connected or consistent plot, the nearest approach to such being, no doubt, the series of adventures through which Punch is supposed to pass; and from what is to be gathered of the drama, as acted in Italy, it would seem to have been used more as a vehicle for retailing the gossip, scandal, and wit of the day. In Naples, according to Forsyth, Punch, in his native tongue, and amongst his native countrymen, used to be a person of real power; he dressed up and retailed all the dröllerries

of the day; he was the channel and sometimes the source of passing opinions; he could inflict ridicule, could gain a mob, or keep a whole kingdom in good humour. Since that period kingly persecution has entirely banished the out-of-door Punch from Naples, but we believe he fares better at the "Teatro di San Carlino," the headquarters of Pulicinella. In this country the introduction of Punch, at first, seems to have served much the same purpose, but dating from Piccini's performances, there has always been a recognized version, although, of course, there has now and then been a slight variation in the adventures of Punch, innovations being introduced to suit the taste and meet the events of the day. Originally the caste, if we may so term it, consisted of Punch, Scaramouch, the Baby, a Courtier, a Blind Beggar, a Constable, a Servant, Jack Ketch, Sathanas, Toby the Dog, Hector the Horse, Judy and Pretty Polly. Amongst the properties were the bell—with which Punch annoyed his neighbours, who, by means of torture, were made to agree with him that it was in turn an organ, fiddle, drum, or trumpet—a ladder and hangman's gallows, a second back scene with a prison window, and a large supply of coffins. The animating "thread in one of Punch's chops," mentioned in the *Tatler*, is a method of performance not now followed, the puppets being played by putting the hands under the dress, the middle finger and thumb serving for the arms, while the fore-finger works the head. The opening and shutting of the mouth is a development which does not appear to have been attained in Italy. "How is Punch's unearthly voice produced?" is a question which most people, with the same curiosity as Albert Smith, will be inclined to ask. Most of us know now that it is not a natural sound but the result of some peculiar instrument in the mouth. "We were taught in infancy," writes Albert Smith, who appears to have been a thorough devotee of "Punch and Judy," "that two quadrangular pieces of tin, bound together by narrow tape, would produce the desired effect when placed between the lips." This is not, however the fact, for although a squeaking sound may thus be perpetrated, no articulation of words is practicable. The secret is revealed by Henry Mayhew, who tells us that the speaking is done by a "call," made of two curved pieces of metal about the size of a knee-buckle, bound together with black thread, and between them is a thin metal plate. We have never been able to

divine why Punch should be represented as speaking in this peculiar manner, and we can only suppose that it has grown up as one of the tricks of the trade since Piccini's day, for this famous exhibitor contented himself with a trumpet.

At the present time it must be confessed that "Punch and Judy" as a performance is at a low ebb. The play has no plot, but merely discloses a series of monstrous crimes and shocking barbarities on the part of Mr. Punch, having neither rhyme nor reason. It neither points a moral nor adorns a tale, the generally supposed aim of most dramatic efforts. And it is wholly destitute of sentiment or romance, and can boast of no wit or humour, beyond a certain amount of coarse and not wholly intelligible buffoonery which, however, appears to go down with the masses. Formerly, however, the performance certainly had the merit of possessing some degree of wit, and used to be made interesting by the introduction of certain notorious or public characters of the day. Thus at the time of the high popularity of "The Provoked Husband," Fielding complained in "Tom Jones" that a puppet-show witnessed by his hero, included "the fine and serious part" of the comedy mentioned. Another interpolation was, after the battle of the Nile, Lord Nelson on one of the street stages endeavouring to persuade Punch, as a brave fellow, to go on board his ship, to assist in fighting the French. "Come, Punch, my boy," said the naval hero, "I'll make you a captain or a commodore, if you like it." "But I don't like it," replied Punch. "I shall be drowned." "Never fear," replied Nelson, "he that is born to be hanged, you know, is sure not to be drowned." Candidates at Parliamentary elections figured prominently on Punch's stage, and during one at Westminster, Sir Francis Burdett was represented kissing Judy and the child, and soliciting Mr. Punch for his vote.

The heyday of Punch, from a financial point of view, has probably gone, and the popularity of the show is not likely again to reach so high as to affect the receipts either at the opera or any of the theatres, as is said to have been the case in his early days. At one time the exhibition was lucrative to its exhibitors; but the cost of the properties and stock of puppets is great, and, although "Punch and Judy" men are not very numerous, much more than a living can hardly be made out of the performance now-a-days. Nevertheless, we do not mean to say that Mr. Punch's popularity

has waned to any appreciable extent. On the contrary, it is probably nearly as great as ever it was, but perhaps its patrons are not of so select a class as heretofore. The most profitable performances are those in houses, and the best seasons are Spring, Christmas, and Midsummer. As regards popularity, Mr. McFarlane has shown that Punch and his family of puppets are the delight of many countries besides Italy. He is as popular in Egypt, Syria, and Turkey as in London or Naples. Under the name of Karaguse, or Black-snout, he has amused and edified the grave, bearded citizens of Cairo and Constantinople for many an age. Traces of him are found in Nubia, and far beyond the Cataracts of the Nile ; and it is supposed types and symbols of him have been discovered among the hieroglyphics of the ancient Egyptians. The wandering Arabs cherish him ; he is at home with the lively Persians ; and beyond the Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean, Karaguse, or Black-snout, is found slightly travestied in Hindostan, Siam, and Pegu, Ava and Cochin China, China Proper and Japan. Even the Tartars behind the great wall of China are not unacquainted with him, nor yet the Kamtchatkans. For this cosmopolitan popularity of Punch we cannot pretend to give any explanation, nor indeed, as regards this country, as we have shown, is it easy to penetrate the secret of Mr. Punch's attractions. By many classes here, no doubt, the humour of the piece, such as it is, is really appreciated and enjoyed ; but, perhaps, by the majority of the adult patrons of this old and ever-famous street drama, the occasion is cherished rather as a bright memory of childhood's happy hours.



The Drama in New York.

BY AUSTIN BRERETON.

FOR full ten days the *Adriatic* had been gallantly fighting her way from England to America, in spite of a curious mixture of rain and sunshine, wind and fog, when the welcome spot known as Fire Island, betokened that we were nearing New York. It was curious to note how as we neared the shore a change came over the spirits of my fellow-passengers, most of whom

were returning home. To some people—indeed, to many—a sea voyage is never agreeable under any circumstances ; but we, alas ! had experienced anything but a delightful passage. The rain favoured us with frequent and inopportune showers, and the sun made its appearance just often enough to make us wish for a little more of his brightness. We were also honoured with a gale of wind—naturally “one of the worst,” that the captain had ever known—a comforting reflection, by the way, for those who were not desirous of seeing land again—but oh ! horror, oh ! worst of sea terrors, we were enveloped in fog for days together. Imagine everything wet and clammy, the engines going at half-speed, and the fog-horn moaning out its dismal warning unceasingly both day and night. But, at any rate, it was a comforting reflection to those who listened—as, indeed, who could help listening—to the melancholy fog-horn, and who heard the cry repeated at intervals from post to post, of “All’s Well,” to know that the mighty ship could not meet with danger unawares, and could not be conquered by disaster without a terrific struggle. But our voyage had its pleasurable incidents to counterbalance the effects of the bad weather. The two most notable incidents were, oddly enough, the religious service held on the Sunday, and a concert given on one of the last nights of the trip. On the Sunday morning the weather was far too rough to think of assembling the passengers for prayer or anything else, but the wind having abated a little in the evening, the saloon was filled by those who wished to join in the prayer for safety and refuge from the waves. These were solemn moments, never to be effaced from memory, when the captain, who, in fair weather, reads the prayers on board ship, was steadfastly keeping to his place on the bridge, and guiding the mighty vessel aright, whilst the hymns of praise and petition to One above were chanted out in strange contrast to the howling of the tempest and the shrieking of the winds. For our concert, we were happy in having the assistance of some professional singers. Madame Trebelli and Madame Fursch-Madi, who were on their way to join the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, gave their assistance, as did M. Ovide Musin, the Belgian violinist, who is now playing at Dr. Damrosch’s symphony concerts. It was a treat to hear these artists, although I am bound to confess the sound of the fog-horn, ever and anon, disturbed the sweet music. The proceeds of the

concert were devoted to that excellent institution, the Liverpool Seaman's Orphanage. But all things come to an end sooner or later, and so did our voyage—later. The doctor came on board and gave us his permission to enter New York, and, in due course, we arrived at the wharf amidst an irritating confusion of sound, resulting from the vigorous application of steam to unlimited whistles and fog-horns. After being comically pushed alongside the quay by three diminutive tug-boats, the custom-house officials kindly gave us leave to go ashore at seven o'clock in the evening, without our luggage. No need to discuss here the discomfort arising from such a proceeding. "Of two evils," saith the old proverb, "choose the lesser," and I elected to penetrate through the heated atmosphere and the rain then prevailing in New York, to staying in the motionless and half-deserted ship; it was not my fault but my misfortune that I chose the greater not the lesser evil.

For getting rid of your cash quickly commend me to New York. Most things—hotels, food, and clothing especially—are dear; but of all the extortionists in the world I think the New York cabman should take the lead. Why, you cannot ride a single mile under a dollar and a half, which, being translated, means six shillings and threepence; and unless you bargain with the driver before you enter his vehicle, he will consider himself justified at the end of the ride in demanding anything from three dollars upwards. Of course the result of these absurd charges is that the wealthier inhabitants of New York keep their private carriages, whilst their less fortunate brethren make use of the elevated railway and the street cars, and it is only the unwary stranger who is fleeced. For the equivalent to fivepence one can ride in the ugly but convenient elevated cars from one end of New York to the other, or from almost any street to another. The system of tram-cars is also elaborate and useful. Such travelling is no doubt very well for a man, but it has its disadvantages. There being but one class in all these conveyances you are thrown of necessity into decidedly mixed company, and for a lady to go about in them requires more than usual courage. Our "hansom" cabs are almost entirely unknown in America, and when, on the last night that I was in New York, I saw one of those convenient vehicles I experienced a shudder of delight, and imagined for the moment that I was in London. Mrs. Langtry, having experienced the

inconvenience of street travel in America, has had a "hansom" specially built for her private use in that country by Messrs. Forder and Company, the well-known builders of Upper Saint Martin's Lane and Wolverhampton. Some of the spirited inhabitants of Chicago have lately imported some of these vehicles, and there is now a chance of the "hansom" becoming more widely circulated and popular in America than heretofore. The Americans are quick to seize upon such improvements, and will surely adopt the "hansom" sooner or later.

The theatres of New York did not impress me with their grandeur. The buildings themselves are generally medium in size, and seldom so large or so fine as our principal London and provincial houses. For size they have nothing to compare to Drury Lane, and for elegance our Haymarket Theatre is unequalled. Our Lyceum and Gaiety, although they would be none the worse for a little fresh paint, are unrivalled. The prettiest theatre in New York is the Madison Square—a little place that could be easily enclosed in a corner of our Princess's Theatre. But what there is of it is certainly very charming, and it possesses all kinds of convenience for the comfort of the public. Through the courtesy of Mr. Daniel Frohman, the manager, I was shown all over the house, and had ample opportunity for noting its advantages. There is a wonderful contrivance for keeping the house at an even and a healthy temperature by means of cooling the heated air with ice, and the stage has two floors which are made to rise and sink, so that one scene can be set while the performance is going on, and thus there need never be a moment's interval in the performance. In hot weather, iced water is also handed round to those who desire it, as here, as at most of the other New York theatres, that abomination of our English playhouses, the drinking-bar, finds no place. Everything about the Madison Square Theatre has the air of a drawing-room; here there is none of that noise and bustle that so frequently attend the visitor to the other houses, where a youth with stentorian lungs usually offends the ear by shouting at the top of his voice, "Coats checked, opera glasses," alternated with "Opera glasses, coats checked," until you feel inclined to cry out as loudly as he, for a little peace and quiet.

On entering an American theatre you take your programme from a basket placed near the entrance—a custom lately inaugurated at our Lyceum. There is no charge for this; but on the

only occasion that I left my coat with the gentleman of the healthy lungs, I was charged a "quarter" (of a dollar), otherwise a shilling, for the honour. I profited by the experience, and, in future, took my coat under my own charge. Excepting on rare occasions, evening dress is seldom seen in the theatre. There is no pit, the ground floor being covered with seats called sometimes orchestra stalls, and at others the parquette. The curious custom which allows a young lady and gentleman to go to the play without the tender though sometimes jealous watchfulness of a chaperone does away with the presence of many old heads, so that an average American audience is composed of younger folk than our own—quiet married people who come to the play as to a duty, and young ladies and gentlemen who are more intent upon watching each other than the performance. Of course, on occasions like the opening of the new opera-house, and Mr. Irving's first appearances in America, the elder folks turned out and appeared, for the most part, in their best costumes and all the glory of dress suits and spotless shirt fronts. Enthusiasm is rare in the American play-house. True enough, applause does come forcibly and heartily at times, as witness the excitement created by our English tragedian, and the raptures displayed over Miss Terry ; but, as a rule, coldness prevails in the American theatre. Take, for instance, the performance of "The Rajah," which had reached a long run when I saw it at the Madison Square house. The theatre was full, and the play went as smoothly, no doubt, as usual. The spectators sat and smiled occasionally, and looked pleased ; but not once in the course of the evening did I hear the clapping of a single pair of hands. For my part, although the play was designated a comedy, I did not see anything to laugh at, for the piece was intolerably dull, and the actors seemed to take their cue from the play and the audience. Once, indeed, when the acting of an old London player, Mr. Dominick Murray, in the sketchy part of a tramp proved remarkably good, the audience gave a faint smile of appreciation, and I prepared to hear a round of applause. But the applause came not, and I left the theatre with a feeling of depression which I must have caught from the audience. At Daly's Theatre—a more commodious house situated in Broadway, and close to Wallack's, the Fifth Avenue, and the Standard Theatre—I saw another successful production entitled "Dollars and Sense," a

German adaptation by Mr. Augustin Daly, the manager. The play was undeniably funny, and some of the acting was really excellent ; but the audience never lost their balance and gave way to mirth and excitement. There are two members of Mr. Daly's company who would make a hit in London. One, Mr. James Lewis, is a comedian who strongly resembles the late George Honey, both in voice and manner ; the other, Miss Ada Rehan, is a graceful comedy actress with a winning manner and a charming style.

At the Union Square Theatre I had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Joseph Jefferson, as Caleb Plummer, in "The Cricket on the Hearth," and Mr. Golightly in "Lend Me Five Shillings"—performances which are deservedly and extremely popular. The programme at this theatre is the largest and most ungainly thing of its kind of modern times. It is a double four-paged bill, each leaf being some fourteen inches long by about nine wide, and it resembles more the old-fashioned bill of our ancestors than the work of modern times. At Wallack's Theatre, where all the sound goes up to the roof, or the "flies," I witnessed "Masks and Faces," and Mr. H. Hamilton's adaptation of "Moths." The hit of the former play was made by the artistic impersonation of Triplet, by Mr. John Howson, whilst Miss Rose Coghlan played with success as Peg Woffington. Miss Adela Meador, who will be remembered in London by her charming performances of Maggie in Mr. Gilbert's "Engaged," at the Court Theatre, and Margaret Eden, in "Odette," seems to have hit the taste of the New York playgoers. She played Mabel Vane capitally. The most striking impersonation in "Moths" was the Lady Dolly of Miss Caroline Hill, and Mr. Charles Glenney gave a good, though slightly unequal, rendering of the character of Lord Jura. Miss Fanny Davenport was drawing large houses at the Fourteenth Street Theatre, by her impersonation of the heroine in Sardou's "Fédora," whilst Mr. R. B. Mantell found many admirers for his passionate acting as Loris. But, to my thinking, the performance of both these artists was entirely spoilt by the inadequacy of the other actors, and the insufficiency of the scenery was very remarkable.

From time immemorial, the "star" seems to have been the sole attraction of the American theatre, and the scenery and stage-management have clearly been utterly unregarded. In most of

the New York theatres the scenery was of the tawdriest description, and would have disgraced a third-rate English theatre. Now, however, there are signs of a change, in that direction at least. Now that English plays are sold to American managers long before they are written, and the intercourse between England and America is so frequent, opportunities are provided which have not hitherto been at command. Models of the English scenery are sent over to America, and the production of a play in that country is generally superintended either by the English author or some one competent to take his place. Thus, the scenery used for "*In the Ranks*," which was produced in America for the first time at the Standard Theatre,* New York, on November 1, excels in beauty that used at the Adelphi Theatre; I have never seen a prettier stage-picture than that of the wood in the first act. But at the Madison Square Theatre, where the double stage gives an advantage denied to other houses, the scenery in the original production of native American growth, "*The Rajah*," was surprisingly poor. And Miss Davenport, with the examples of Paris and London before her, has apparently thought the scenery for *Fédora* beneath her notice. All who have studied M. Sardou's art will admit that he derives great benefit in his plays from their surroundings. Indeed, perfection in scenic detail is almost absolutely necessary in order to understand his work. Mr. Bancroft appreciates this, and has given sufficient proof of the fact in the manner in which he produced "*Diplomacy*," "*Odette*," and "*Fédora*." Mr. Irving's visit to America has had the good effect of showing that it is to the advantage of the principal actor in a play to be well supported. The acting of Hamlet is not spoiled by the perfect realization of Ophelia. With the disadvantages of playing on a stage so inadequate as that of the New York Star Theatre, Mr. Irving managed to give his plays a proper fitting, to fill the subordinate parts with competent actors, and yet to make his own acting stand out prominently in spite of the surroundings. Mr. Lawrence Barrett has understood this, and in his production of "*Francesca di Rimini*" he was well supported, and he used good scenery; but his own powerful acting was not subdued in consequence.

*

*

*

*

*

*

* This theatre, the first in the United States, in which Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's operas were produced, was destroyed by fire on December 14, 1883.

Let me leave these notes of to-day, and go back a little while. In the centre of the burying-ground attached to St. Paul's Church, which is situated in the centre of the busiest part of New York, there lies all that remain of the mutilated body of George Frederick Cooke. That extraordinary mixture of genius and profligacy had made his first appearance in New York, on November 21, 1810, as Richard III., and in seventeen nights he drew twenty-five thousand five-hundred and seventy-eight dollars. But from the day that he landed in the United States he had been dying, and his vigorous constitution eventually succumbed to the effects of drunkenness. On July 31, 1812, he was taken ill whilst playing Sir Giles Overreach, at Boston, and in the following September he breathed his last. On September 27, he was interred in the "stranger's vault" of St. Paul's, with "much respectful ceremony." When Edmund Kean was in America, he received permission from Bishop Hobart to remove Cooke's body, and in the transition possessed himself of one of the toe-bones of the unfortunate actor. He had the mutilated body covered by a handsome monument, which exists to this day, and consists of a pedestal, surmounted by an urn, from which issue fiery tongues. On one of the four sides of the pedestal is this inscription: "Erected to the memory of George Frederick Cooke, by Edmund Kean, of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, 1821." Beneath the inscription is this not very graceful distich:—

"Three kingdoms claim his birth;
Both hemispheres pronounce his worth."

On the second side of the pedestal are the words, "Repaired by Charles Kean, 1846," and on the third side we find that the monument was "Repaired by E. A. Sothern, Theatre Royal, Haymarket, 1874."



Henry Irving.

Henry Irving: A Biographical Sketch. By AUSTIN BRERETON.
London: David Bogue, 3, St. Martin's Place, S.W.

IT is only a few years ago that we were all complaining of the lamentable insufficiency of dramatic books. For a certain well-defined period theatrical history is literally a blank. No one has ever attempted to continue the history of the stage from the date that Geneste dropped it; and such records as it contains,—rich and valuable records—are buried in inconvenient and inaccessible newspapers. Down to the time of Macready our bookshelves are fairly supplied with fact and fiction concerning the stage, but for the last quarter of a century there has been no inducement held out even to the patient and industrious to collect the scattered memoranda of an institution that never dies. Often and often it has been asked why Mr. E. L. Blanchard, the most learned authority on the stage and amusements in general for half a century and more, has never been asked to place upon paper the exhaustless stores of his memory. Unfortunately his contributions to the history of the stage have been fugitive and scattered. They may be found after a diligent search in metropolitan and provincial newspapers, in almanacks, reviews, and magazines. But Blanchard's history of the stage has yet to come. Take the period, for instance, between the retirement of Macready and the accession of Irving. This was a valuable and important period. Then reigned Charles Kean and Samuel Phelps. Where is its history to be found? where are the facts connected with it to be discovered save in the columns of newspapers? Professor Morley's "History of a London Playgoer" is out of print. Charles Kean's life as recorded by John William Cole is comparatively worthless. Not a man has yet been found to write the life and times of Samuel Phelps, one of the most vital and important periods of the British drama. To the generations to come the famous managements of Phelps and Greenwood at Sadlers Wells, and of Charles Kean at the Princess's, will be as if they had never existed, unless writers like E. L. Blanchard and Palgrave Simpson are induced to give us the contents of their dramatic diaries.

Suddenly, however, there appears to be a change for the better.



"I would be friends with you, and have your love."

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

Key Stone.

There is a greater activity in dramatic books. Had Mr. Dutton Cook been spared longer, we might have had supplied to us the lost gap in our dramatic history with a certainty that it would be accurate and complete. Positively Mr. Dutton Cook was induced—and by a publisher too—to reprint some of his valuable dramatic criticism, so that the people who follow us need not necessarily suppose that dramatic criticism died with Hazlitt, Charles Lamb, and Leigh Hunt. Is it not strange that the best newspaper criticisms of George Henry Lewes have never been published? His book, “Actors and Acting,” is excellent but not exhaustive. Is it not marvellous that there have been no reprints from the *Times*’ criticisms of John Oxenford—that master of style, who could describe a plot of a play better than any one who ever preceded or followed him. Publishers, however, to this day fight shy of theatrical books that are not wholly fiction. They encourage ignorant and superficial ladies to write novels about the stage that are as misleading as they are foolish, but they do not find at present that there is nearly such a good market for books on the stage in this country as there is in America. We say that the stage was never so popular as now, and yet the dramatic historian gets scant encouragement. Book-buyers certainly do not rush at dramatic literature in this country if it is of the first class. A scurrilous dramatic article written in a slangy and vulgar style finds instant purchasers; the well-argued essay is a drug in the market.

Mr. Austin Brereton has, however, dared to stem the tide, and has produced a book that will be welcomed and purchased by all who love the stage of to-day, and admire the man who is its greatest and most distinguished ornament. The life of Henry Irving is no ordinary book. It is statistical, but it is never dull. Its facts are indisputable, but its interest is not wholly contained in dates and figures. It is at once a picture-book for the drawing-room table, and a reference volume for the dramatic library. Its personal history reads like romance, and there is no attempt made to be bombastic or dogmatic in criticism. So many strange tales are told of the early career of actors that it is interesting to learn the accurate particulars of the boyhood days of such a man as Henry Irving :—

The earliest impressions of youth are often amongst those which have most influence in moulding character, and the early life of Henry Irving was well fitted to develop the traits which mark the artistic temperament. Born in a Somerset village; spending much of his childhood amongst the Cornish rocks

and mines ; and then suddenly transferred to the very heart of London before he was ten years of age—young Irving had enough experience to fill with vague aspirations the mind of an impressionable boy. John Henry Brodribb Irving was an only son, and was born on February 6, 1838, at Keinton, near Glastonbury—hard by that famous abbey built on the spot where the staff of Joseph of Arimathea took root, and became the famous thorn-tree which blossomed at Christmas. His father was a man of somewhat restless and undecided character, with whom the world did not prosper. It was from his mother that the child derived much of that strength of character which afterwards distinguished him. This lady was a Miss Behenna, one of six sisters of an old Cornish family. An uncommon race these Behennas must have been, judging from the specimens which still survive. With one of these ladies much of the youth of Henry Irving—all the time not spent with his mother—was passed. Sarah Behenna had married Captain Isaac Penberthy, a famous Cornish miner, whose memory still lives in the once great mining district round St. Ives, notwithstanding the changes of effort and of sentiment in the five lustres which have passed since his death. Captain Penberthy was a somewhat remarkable man—of enormous physical strength and iron will, a true Cornishman, and a fit captain of mines—whose will was law to his subordinates, and in whom his employers had absolute confidence. More than half a century ago he had gone out to Mexico to work a mine called *Rel del Monte*, up country from Vera Cruz. Here he brought his enterprise to a successful issue, through all the dangers incidental to the time and place, and after three years of work in the wilderness, left the mine prosperous beyond expectation, and returned to Cornwall to marry Miss Behenna, and to become the captain of four great mines. These mines lay in three parishes round St. Ives : Providence, in Lelant ; Biscaswell and Spërnmore, in St. Just ; and Trevega, in St. Ives. Of these works, *Wheal Providence* was the most successful, and under the skilful and energetic rule of Captain Penberthy, it grew to enormous proportions, till the adventurers—as in the quaint language of the mines, the immediate speculators in mining enterprise are called—grew rich, and the workers in and about the mine numbered some two thousand souls. After the death of Captain Penberthy, in 1848, the prosperity of *Wheal Providence* lapsed, and to-day the stranger can but wonder at its grand proportions as he wanders amongst its ruins, and notes how the great iron cranks lie broken, and how the massive walls are sunken and overthrown ; or when coming from the St. Ives road below, he marks how the great mound of refuse cuts the blue outline of the Cornish sky. It was not without a sterling cause, and it was no small tribute from an essentially working community, that the funeral of Captain Penberthy was attended by some two thousand miners, who came from many leagues around, and that on the day of the burial no mining fires were burned throughout the confines of four large parishes.

Captain Penberthy had three children—two boys and a girl, and in this family the major part of Henry Irving's first years was passed. His mother, anxious that her boy should breathe the fresh air of her native Cornwall, rather than the confined atmosphere of central London, took him, when he was little more than a baby, to her sister in Halsetown.

It would be difficult to find, even amid Cornish wilds, a spot more desolate by Nature than this same Halsetown. Between gently sloping hills, here and there burrowed with mining drift, like gigantic mole-hills, a small valley tends northwards to the sea, some two miles beyond St. Ives. The whole countryside is bare except on the east, where the hill is crowned with trees, amidst which rises an obelisk of grey granite—a local landmark of sufficient peculiarity to be worthy of notice. One Kerill, a barrister, erected it as his tomb—though he was never buried in it—bequeathing an estate to trustees, for certain quaint ceremonies to be carried out every fifth year. At such times a band of

matrons and virgins, headed by the mayor of St. Ives in his robes, and the rector of the parish, and, accompanied by musicians, walk to the summit of the hill, and forming a circle round the obelisk, dance a merry measure and chant a psalm. Athletic sports, for which prizes are provided, complete this quaint festival.

When Henry Irving first came to Cornwall, the effects of the religious revival, which had deeply stirred the hearts of Cornishmen ten years before, existed in full force. The Cornish are naturally religious, not only with the strong faith common to all whose calling is "to go down to the great deep in ships," or to endure daily the hardships and perils of the mine, but with the tendency to spiritual insight natural to an earnest and imaginative people. Now and again we meet in the Duchy with beauties of thought and speech, of ripe appreciation of Nature's mysteries, which are certainly the gifts of the poet or the dreamer. Cornwall is essentially a county of romance. Every rock has its name and story, every hill its gnome, every well its sprite. A love of the "eerie" distinguishes young and old. One of the pranks of the mischievous in Halsetown was what they called "guise-dancing," a wild riot in masks and mummary, in which the villagers entered one another's houses, and frightened the children who were in bed. Ghost stories were told with great relish, especially by an ancient dame nearly a century old, who liked to terrify little Irving, and on whom he revenged himself one evening when she had gone early to bed, by suddenly appearing in her room with two of his cousins, and conducting a kind of prayer for impenitent story-tellers, while the old dame in a fury vainly strove to reach her stick.

Thus in the midst of this wild country, full of natural beauty, and quick with fancies and legends—in a circle where the duties of life were set out straight from the Bible—with the memory of a mother far away, and vivid recollections of parting and loneliness, the poetical instincts of young Henry Irving became first awakened. It was indeed a privilege—since he was separated from his own mother—that he had the guardianship of such a woman as Sarah Penberthy, who to day bears her eighty-three years with the vigour and dignity of a superb youth, and who, in her sweet, dignified simplicity, and stern purity, recalls the mothers of the race which created New England.

At Halsetown, Irving passed his early years, getting the best teaching which the place afforded. Life was stern and prosaic enough, as it ever is to imaginative children when their home is amongst strangers, no matter how dear those strangers may be. The boy's fancy was fed by the few books allowed in the house by the religious teaching of the time and place. The Bible, a volume of old English Ballads, and "Don Quixote," formed the library. One can easily imagine how the recital of the grand old Bible stories, or the ballads of Chevy Chase, or Sir Patrick Spens, around the hearth-place in winter, or among the daisies on the hill-side in summer, or on the great rocks overhanging Parepta sands, stimulated the boy's venturesome desire to move abroad and be doing, and his longing for the stirring life of the city where his parents dwelt.

From this life of health and hope, of loneliness and picturesque beauty, the change to the stifling air and prosaic surroundings of the London streets was abrupt. Here, however, he brought with him a constitution so strengthened by the Cornish sea-breezes that its natural iron was wrought to its temper of steel, and has since become a marvel amongst working-men.

In the year 1849, the boy was placed by his father at the private school of Dr. Pinches, in George Yard, Lombard Street. Here he exhibited some of his dramatic power, and at one of the school entertainments, when the boys recited English classics and Latin verse, he wished to recite the poem of "The Uncle," the weirdness of which struck his fancy. Dr. Pinches, however, good-

humouredly read the poem, and, after advising him to choose something a little less theatrical, selected Curran's "Defence of Hamilton Rowan." After some two years at this school—during which time his one enjoyment was the drama and all connected with it—he was placed in the office of a friend, where he remained for a year, learning the duties of a clerk. He then entered the office of Messrs. W. Thacker & Co., East India merchants, in Newgate Street, where he had the prospect of going after a time to India, and of eventually attaining a fair position in the world of commerce.

Mr. Brereton is lucky also in his opportunity of placing on record the early life of Irving by those who really knew him.

It is interesting to follow, as well as we can, across the lapse of time, the history of this enthusiasm. The following monograph, from the pen of a gentleman, well known in the world of art, who was a companion of his at this time, refers to the year 1853, when Irving first became a member of what was called the "City Elocution Class":—

"Thirty years ago when acting was not such a fashionable pastime as it is now, the late Mr. Samuel Phelps was in the very zenith of his career, as manager of Sadler's Wells Theatre, producing one after another those grand Shakesperian revivals which still live in the memory of those who had the privilege of witnessing them. He was so much in earnest that he created for himself a host of worshippers. It is not too much to say that the progress of the elevation of the drama, begun by Mr. Macready, was about that period mainly due to the energy, ability, and enterprise of Samuel Phelps.

"His influence upon the young men of that time was wonderful, and in consequence, classes for the study of elocution sprang up in many of the mechanics' and other educational institutions in London. One of the most successful of these classes was held at the Institute in Gould Square, somewhere in the region of Fenchurch Street, in the city. It was formed by the late Henry Thomas, a man of much ability, who attracted to his class a number of young men who became imbued with his love of acting. He did not set himself up as a teacher of elocution; his class was conducted on a system of mutual instruction and criticism; each member recited some piece chosen by himself, and the others noted any errors of the aspirate or inflection, of gesture or expression, and made their remarks orally after the recitation. This system worked admirably, as it caused the members to be watchful as to errors of pronunciation, and also gave them practice and confidence in extemporaneous speaking. Nothing gave Mr. Thomas greater delight than the advent of some new member who showed anything approaching histrionic ability.

"One evening a youth of some fifteen years old presented himself as a new member; his appearance was such as would make ladies say 'What a nice boy!' he was rather tall for his age, dressed in a black cloth suit, with what was called a round jacket, and deep white linen collar turned over it; his face was very handsome, with a mass of black hair, and eyes bright and flashing with intelligence. He was called upon for his first recitation, and fairly electrified the class with an unusual display of elocutionary skill and dramatic intensity. The new member was the now world-famous Henry Irving. Poor Henry Thomas has long since gone over to the majority, but had he lived he would have delighted in the thought that he had some share in fostering and developing the genius of one so deservedly esteemed as the foremost English actor of his age.

"The 'City Elocution Class,' as it was called, soon afterwards had its meetings at Sussex Hall, Leadenhall Street, and here, periodically, dramatic performances were given by the class, each member receiving tickets for distribu-

tion among his friends. The room in which the entertainments were given was a commodious hall, with a good platform enclosed by a balustrade. Two five-fold screens, with a 'practical' door in each, for exits and entrances, supplied the place of scenery, and as the success of the pieces given depended more on the acting than the furniture and appointments, excellent performances were the result. The pieces played were mostly of a light character—many of them are now almost forgotten—but they were highly appreciated at the time. They consisted of 'Boots at the Swan,' 'Delicate Ground,' 'The Man with the Carpet Bag,' 'Love in Humble Life,' 'Who Speaks First,' 'Little Toddlekins,' 'A Silent Woman,' and others of a like class suitable for presentation as drawing-room performances. The new member of the 'City Elocution Class' soon became a great favourite at these meetings, every opportunity being taken to cast him for such parts as his youthful appearance would admit of. He was successful in everything he undertook, and when opportunity served he displayed unmistakable gifts. One of the rules of the class was that each member should know the words of his part, and any one failing in this respect met with the utmost ridicule. Our young member was almost letter-perfect, so that his mind was free to give due effect to the author's meaning. But it was in recitation that, at this time, he appeared to the greatest advantage, his youth being against his assumption of manly parts. One of his most successful efforts at this period was the part of Wilford, in selected scenes from 'The Iron Chest,' to the Sir Edward Mortimer of a gentleman now holding an official position in the art world. On this occasion his lines were given with such force, earnestness, and pathos, as to elicit the most enthusiastic applause. Henry Irving's dramatic aspirations were emphasized by a performance of 'The Honeymoon,' given by the class at the Soho Theatre, when the members appeared in all the glory of tights, silk cloaks, and hats and feathers.

"Not many, perhaps, who witnessed the entertainments at Sussex Hall, and saw and admired the handsome lad with the black hair and flashing eyes, will be able to associate him with the now eminent actor; but by those who were favoured with his acquaintance then, and who have watched his remarkable career, those far-off days are regarded with the utmost interest and pleasure."

The description of the actual plunge made by Henry Irving when he determined to adopt the stage as a career will be read with greedy interest by the many aspirants for dramatic fame who honour critics and editors with their oft-repeated queries—how to get on the stage, who to ask, what to do, and as to the advisability of the course they are pursuing. How many of us, who have interested ourselves in the stage, are constantly asked to give advice on the following query: "I am a young clerk with a salary of £100 a year. I have taken an interest in amateur theatricals all my life. I am considered by my friends a good actor. I cannot sleep at night or attend to my business for thinking of the stage. Do you, Mr. Editor, advise me to throw up my appointment, and to go upon the stage in spite of my parent's desires?"

This is what Mr. Irving did:—

It is worthy of note that the actor had, in his early youth, but very few opportunities of seeing plays. He had never seen any entertainment but the

bustle of a village fair, where there was not even a Punch and Judy Show, till more than a year after he came to live in London. His first experience of the theatre was a visit to Sadler's Wells, when Mr. Phelps played Hamlet. The boy never forgot this performance, and often since then he has told the friends of his later life of the profound impression it made upon his mind. Another recollection still more vivid is that of his first visit to a theatre alone. He found his way to the Adelphi, and sat in the gallery with a feeling that he was very wicked, and that the gallery would probably fall into the pit for his special punishment. Presently somebody began to talk to him. His spirits revived, and he became so absorbed in the entertainment, which consisted of "The Haunted Man," "The Enchanted Isle," and the farce of "Slasher and Crasher," that he left the theatre with reluctance at one in the morning, after six hours enjoyment, and got home an hour later to find his father and mother in a state of terrible anxiety. All the time of his City life he never went to the play till he had studied the piece which he was to see, and made an effort to arrange the action for himself. Much was to be learned at this time at Sadler's Wells, the only theatre that attracted Irving. In addition to the study of books and in the elocution class, Irving also obtained what aid he could in the way of lessons from an actor. About the year 1854, he was fortunate enough to obtain the assistance of Mr. William Hoskins, a leading actor at Sadler's Wells, who was struck with the earnestness and the comparative proficiency of the lad, and gave him assistance far beyond the ordinary lessons. To meet the convenience of the young clerk, whose day's work began at a quarter-past nine in the morning, Mr. Hoskins made what must have been a very considerable sacrifice of his habitual hours of rest—for early rising is hardly consistent with the requirements of theatrical life—and gave his young pupil his hour-long lesson from eight o'clock. Prior to his departure for Australia, where he has been ever since, Mr. Hoskins introduced Irving to Mr. Phelps, who offered him an engagement, but, as the youth wished to get experience before playing in London, Hoskins gave him a letter, saying, "You will go upon the stage. When you want an engagement, present that letter, and you will find one." Indeed, the worthy man would gladly have taken Irving with him to Australia for three years, could he have persuaded the mother to part with her boy.

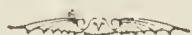
For two more years Irving remained in London studying hard, and preparing himself in every way. In these two years he learned a great number of parts—a study which a few years later was of immense advantage to him. During this period, too, he studied and practised fencing—going twice a week to a school of arms kept by one Shury, in Chancery Lane. The practice in fencing he never allowed to lapse, but continued it, when in Edinburgh, under the direction of Captain Roland.

In 1856, being then between eighteen and nineteen years of age, Irving felt that the time had come when he should enter upon the practical exercise of his calling. Accordingly he bade farewell to his London and commercial life, and, by means of Mr. Hoskins' talismanic letter, he at once procured an engagement from Mr. E. D. Davis, the old theatrical manager, who was just entering upon the management of the newly-built Lyceum Theatre, Sunderland.

Another value of Mr. Brereton's book is, that it forms an excellent skeleton or framework to which, at some future time, much more may be added. We read about Henry Irving's interesting career in the provinces, his hard work there, the enormous number of parts he studied, of his persistency, industry, and humour, of his exposure of the Davenport Brothers, and many other valuable anecdotes; but it

must be confessed there is a great temptation on the part of those who have known Henry Irving well and intimately, ever since he arrived in London to join Miss Herbert's company at the St. James's, to trace step by step the upward progress of his very remarkable career. Such a description would be instinct with interest, and would show how the nature of Henry Irving has endeared him to some of the most celebrated men of his time, and made him a welcome guest in the best literary and art society. Such recollections would take the reader to the charming and hospitable house of Charles Mathews in Brompton Square, where, on certain Sunday evenings, sixteen or seventeen years ago, would be gathered such congenial spirits as Planché, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Mathews, most excellent of hosts ; Mr. and Mrs. Frank Matthews, most amusing of guests ; as well as H. J. Byron, Edmund Yates, George Rose, Palgrave Simpson, and Walter Gordon. They would mark out that faithful and beautiful friendship between Henry Irving and super-excellent John Lawrence Toole, that no time or circumstance has changed or sullied. They would travel over the Bateman period of trial to the ultimate Lyceum haven of success, showing meanwhile how Irving has made the acquaintance of all that is left of the Kemble family, has ingratiated himself with the Macreadyites, has been on terms of intimacy with the last of the Keans, with the Wigans, with Charles Dickens, with all in any way connected with the past drama, has found a valued friend in the Baroness Burdett Coutts, and has been ever welcome in that charming literary and musical society, presided over by an excellent gentleman and learned playgoer, Mr. J. M. Levy, who, with his family, has done more for the welfare and well-being of the stage, than any patron and cordial friend who can be quoted as intimately connected with its history through a succession of changing years. But these things will come in time. For the present the life of Henry Irving is at once a history and a textbook. It is interesting to the passing reader ; it is simply invaluable to the student. The book has already been made welcome in America ; in England no library will be complete without it.

C. S.



Our Play=Box.

"THE SPIDER'S WEB."

An Original Drama, in four acts, by HENRY PETTITT. First produced at the Grand Theatre, Glasgow, on May 28, 1883. Acted, for the first time in London, at the Olympic Theatre, on Saturday, December 1, 1883.

Septimus Wragby ...	MR. G. W. ANSON.	Jem Baldock ...	MR. E. HENDRIC.
Matthew Greenfield ...	MR. J. F. YOUNG.	John Brady ...	MR. E. COALBROOK.
Frank Manby ...	MR. H. H. VINCENT.	Tom Titley ...	MISS MINNIE RAYNER.
John Staunton ...	MR. PHILLIP BECK.	Mabel Greenfield ...	MISS ALMA MURRAY.
Bob Leverett ...	MR. C. W. SOMERSET.	Susan Roseleigh ...	MISS LAURA LINDEN.

IT seems an unkind thing to dwell upon the obvious shortcomings of an unsuccessful play. Here was an instance of a work accepted in good faith, rehearsed in earnest, committed to the care of competent people, and rewarded with unanimous ridicule. As a matter of history the facts of the case appear to be briefly these :—A Mrs. Conover, who, no doubt, is a very excellent and deserving person, took it into her head that she would like to manage a theatre. It was very ambitious on the part of Mrs. Conover ; but if I were to propose to command an Arctic expedition my egotism would not be more pronounced than that of Mrs. Conover. Indeed, Mrs. Conover showed the white feather at the outset, and shirked the responsibility of her own enterprise by asking Mrs. Chippendale to conduct what she was clearly unable to manage. The first brilliant idea of this Amazonian duet was a play by Mr. Pettitt called the "Spider's Web," that is supposed to have been a success in the provinces. For my own part I don't believe it. I have too much faith in provincial audiences to credit any provincial critic with a belief in the "Spider's Web." As if to tempt Providence, the guileless management, when the doors of the Olympic were opened, advanced the pit boldly to their old and accustomed places. For once in a way they were out in the open. They were not thrust under galleries or pent-houses ; they were not isolated or remote. They were placed *en evidence*, just where the pit was at the Olympic in the days of Robson and Alfred Wigan ; and at last the pit found itself a power capable of coping with the imbeciles who make up the majority of an audience on first nights at a theatre. The pit was not long in testing its strength and asserting its power. They watched and waited. The play was found foolish, pointless, and absurd. It was too preposterous for serious consideration ; too silly for burlesque. A wild amalgam of extravagance and absurdities at last aroused the just indignation of a disgusted audience, and the pit, strong in its power, hissed the play off the stage in strict accordance with its deserts. Doubtless the unfortunate people behind the curtain were prepared with any amount of claptrap and bombastic folly. Mr. Anson was, no doubt, eager to rush forward and declare with perfect truth that Mrs. Conover was a most estimable lady, and that Mrs. Chippendale was the most valuable directress in creation. Harrowing pictures might have been drawn of actresses fainting in their dressing-rooms, and actors swearing in the green-room. But that dodge has been tried before ; so, as the play was supremely bad, the

pit continued to hiss lustily. They could not have done otherwise had they respected the institution of the pit. But opinions differ. I happened to be sitting next to an elderly lady, who had extreme views as to the legitimate powers of an audience. She conceived it to be discourteous on the part of the pit to resent the insult that had been inflicted on that ancient institution. Periodically this irate female turned round and inwardly cursed the pit for their pluck and bravery. She muttered imprecations about "cruelty," "cowardice," and so on, forgetting that a legitimate function was being legitimately exercised. The sorry thing at last came to an end, and a weak attempt was made to prove that spite or prejudice had secured a failure that was self-evident. It was nothing of the kind. The pit had come, having paid their money, prepared to be pleased. They watched and waited. They passed over in silence a tissue of absurdities, and at last, when they found that their intelligence was ridiculed by the baby-stuff served up to them, they showed their disapprobation in the usual fashion. Such a failure as this invariably gives rise to innumerable excuses. Motive for a fiasco rings for a long time in the air. First of all the critics are gibbeted. Somebody has offended somebody else. Mr. Jones, of the *Daily Thunderer*, has got some spite against Mr. This or Miss That. Mr. Robinson, of the *Diurnal Intelligencer*, has got a play that he wants produced. Mr. Snooks, of the *Slocum Pogis Courier*, is determined to ruin poor Mr. Pettitt. Mr. Anson is to suffer the penalty for having insulted an audience in days gone by, and so on. All nonsense, my dear sir. The play failed because it was a thoroughly bad play, and deserved to fail. The audience in their hearts pitied Mr. Anson, who is a clever and excellent actor. They pitied Miss Alma Murray, who was placed in a false position. They were sorry that Miss Laura Linden had no opportunity for showing how clever she is, and they wanted the play to succeed. But they hissed it and condemned it because it was useless, silly, and unintelligible; they would have none of it, and they were right. To have given countenance to such a work would have been a premium on careless work and thoughtless management. London is at present overstocked with theatres. There are not companies to occupy them or authors to write for them. It is rank egotism all round to believe that any sane audience would find comfort in "The Spider's Web" or applaud its interpretation.

"THE GOLDEN RING."

A New and Original Fairy Spectacular Opera, in three acts, written by GEORGE R. SIMS,
composed by FREDERIC CLAY. First produced, on the
occasion of the opening of the new Alhambra Theatre, Monday, December 3, 1883.

Calino	MR. J. G. TAYLOR.	Captain	MR. HODGES.
Florian	MR. F. GAILLARD.	Sirene	MISS CONSTANCE LOSEBY.
Carambole	MR. WILFRED ESMOND.	Arethusa	MISS SALLIE TURNER.
Dr. Colchicum	MR. GEORGE MUDIE.	Princess Blanche	MISS MARION HOOD.
Prince Poppet	MISS ALICE HAMILTON.	Casquette	MISS IRENE VERONA.
Rigmarole	MR. G. A. HONEY.	Serpenta	MISS ADELAIDE NEWTON.
Cleon	MR. FRED MERVIN.	Sea Nymph	MISS EILY BEAUMONT.
Alimanes	MR. AYSLEY COOK.	Joujou	MISS VACANI.
Admiral	MR. OSCAR HARTWELL.	Tribord	MIDLE. LOUIE.
Herald	MR. A. DARRELL.		

IN less than a year from the date of its destruction the Alhambra Theatre has been rebuilt and started afresh with a gorgeous spectacular

piece, which has already proved a great success. The author and composer of "The Golden Ring" are happy in their allegiance to each other. Mr. George R. Sims has written an attractive piece, satisfying, if not brilliant, and to his well-chosen words Mr. Frederic Clay has provided some of the most delightful music that has been heard on the light opera stage for a considerable time. Though not, as a rule, what is known as "catching," it is nevertheless full of melody, and is ever pleasing to the ear. The story of an Alhambra piece is generally vague and difficult to determine, and the present instance is no exception to the rule. So far as one can judge, the chief personages in the piece are a good and an evil man, each of whom is assisted in his plans by a fairy, and both aspire to win the affection of a beautiful princess. The good fairy is the slave of a golden ring which she gives to the mortal she designs to protect, and the constant changing of the ring from one person to another is the backbone of the play. The most noteworthy incident of the first act is a pastoral ballet, which is as pretty as anything of its kind in the opera. In this act we are introduced to the principal characters, including Mr. J. G. Taylor as the King and Miss Sallie Turner as the Queen. The King departs on a voyage round the world "for the benefit of his health," leaving his kingdom, his Queen, and the beautiful princess to be guarded by the young knight, Florian. In this act Mdle. Louie should be seen for her capital dancing of a sailor's hornpipe. One of the most important scenes of the second act is a representation of a portion of the Fisheries Exhibition, in which Mr. Taylor disports himself as a "masher" of a most pronounced type. Here also a chorus attired as fisher-girls of various nationalities sing to the prettiest music in the opera. This chorus was enthusiastically encored on the first night, and is certain to become popular. The most notable incident of this act is, however, a storm ballet, and a sudden change of the dark scene to light and sparkle, and the singularly graceful dancing of the favourite Mdle. Pertoldi, who is ably supported by Miss T. Elliott and Mdles. Sismondi and Louie. In the third and last act, to quote the words with which Mr. Sims has pre-faced his book, "all is hurried forward for the marriage ceremony, and many strange things happen which it would spoil the dramatic interest of the opera to reveal. It will suffice to say that all eventually ends happily, and the union of Florian and Blanche is celebrated with all the lavish magnificence which the resources of the Alhambra have placed at the disposal of the author and composer." The precise meaning of this "ambiguous giving out" may not be rightly interpreted, but surely enough the concluding scene of "The Golden Ring" is startling in its show of splendour. The stage presents a double staircase at the back, down which descends a small army of brilliantly dressed girls, who group themselves on the stage, and, led by Mdle. Consuello de la Bruyère, go through a series of effective dances and poses. The dresses in this scene are truly magnificent, and have been designed, as have all the other costumes in the piece, by M. Wilhelm. The fun of the piece finds ample expression in the inimitable humour of Mr. J. G. Taylor, as the King, and Miss Sallie Turner, who plays the Queen with a solidity of manner entirely her own and most mirth-provoking. The lover is represented by Mr. F. Gaillard, who may look the

part well enough, but his singing and expression are weak and faulty, and his accent certainly mars what otherwise might be good in his impersonation. The honours of the piece undoubtedly fall to Miss Marion Hood, who possesses a voice of remarkable sweetness and expression, and her enunciation is always distinct. Aided by a charming presence, she not only sings her part well, but she acts it also. Miss Constance Loseby, a great favourite, is again at hand to sing with all her old power, and Miss Adelaide Newton proves herself the possessor of a voice of considerable strength, and acts with much ability. Miss Irene Verona gives a bright, sparkling rendering of a small part, and Miss Eily Beaumont delivers her one song, "Naiads and Nymphs," very prettily and effectively. Miss Alice Hamilton is vivacious in a small character. Mr. F. Mervin acquits himself as well as possible in a thankless part, a remark which applies equally to Mr. Aynsley Cook. Mr. Wilfred Esmond has no chance for the display of his ability. Mr. G. A. Honey, Mr. George Mudie, Mr. Oscar Hartwell, Mr. R. Darrell, Mr. Hodges, and Miss Vacani fill the remaining characters.

"CLAUDIAN."

A Play, in a Prologue and Four Acts. The Plot, Story, and Construction by HENRY HERMAN; the Dialogue by W. G. WILLS. First produced, at the Princess's Theatre, on Thursday, December 6, 1883.

Characters in the Prologue.

Claudian Andiates ...	MR. WILSON BARRETT.	Sesiphon	MR. W. A. ELLIOTT.
The Holy Clement ...	MR. E. S. WILLARD.	Demos	MR. H. EVANS.
Theorus	MR. FRANK COOPER.	Captain of the Scy- } thians	MR. MATTHEWS.
Zosimus	MR. F. HUNTLEY.	Serena	MISS EMMELINE ORMSBY.
Volpas	MR. NEVILLE DOONE.	Caris	MISS PHÆBE CARLO.
Symachus	MR. C. FULTON.		

Characters in the Play.

Claudian Andiates ...	MR. WILSON BARRETT.	Almida	MISS EASTLAKE.
Alcares	MR. CLIFFORD COOPER.	Edessa	MISS HELEN VINCENT.
Belos	MR. GEORGE BARRETT.	Threna	MISS GARTH.
Thariogalus	MR. CHARLES HUBSON.	Clia... ..	MISS NELLIE PALMER.
Agazil	MR. WALTER SPEAKMAN.	Galena	MRS. HUNTLEY.
Rhamantes	MR. C. POLHILL.	Hera	MISS MARY DICKENS.
Officer of the Hercu- } leans	MR. H. DE SOLLA.	Sabella	MISS HELEN BRUNO.
Goths of the Te- } trarch's Guard... }	MESSRS. BURNAGE AND BELTON.	Gratia	MISS ALICE COOK.
		Cloris	MR. H. BESLEY.

IN recent times, I am bound to confess, few plays have grown upon me more than Claudian; I have studied few dramatic works that have affected me with such various impressions. It is said, and very justly said, that there is much excellent music that cannot be sufficiently grasped and appreciated on a first and early acquaintance with it. You are fascinated, but not wholly absorbed. Your mind is stimulated; the music gets a certain possession over you. But it is not until you have studied it and become thoroughly familiar with the master-mind that you are introduced to new beauties and new delights. It is surely the same with poetry. How often in early years we have cast aside as uninteresting or unattractive that which in after years becomes a solace and a delight? There are a thousand ways by which poetry is made part, as it were, of our nature. You may have read a poem, or attempted to read it, a dozen times without thoroughly discovering its power or its beauty. Suddenly some quiet evening a friend comes by, an appreciative spirit drops in; he reads the poem with the added interest of his own mind, and we perceive a gleam of light. The whole poem is illumined; that which was before a shadow

becomes a substance. Why, then, should not the same thing occur with the drama that happens daily in connection with music and poetry, and indeed I might add painting? Has not there been a time when we have been converted to the most difficult music by the subtle skill of an enthusiastic interpreter? Can we not all recall a moment when the mere reading of a poem has caused a revolution in our minds? For my own poor part, I can recall many and many such a moment. It was the magic touch of some skilled and strong-souled musician who has perhaps not made us first love Wagner's music, for instance, but has led us gently and affectionately to the better understanding of him. It was the deeper mind of some student of poetry who has attuned our thoughts to the proper appreciation and understanding of Wordsworth and Keats, Burns and Tennyson, Browning and Matthew Arnold, Swinburne and Rossetti.

It should not be strange, then, that a good play—and by a good play I mean a thoughtful play, a direct process of thought, and the result of the employment of intellect—should affect the mind relatively, as do music, poetry, and painting. We have few such plays now-a-days. The majority of dramas and comedies are light, pleasant, appetizing, and easily digested. They can be discussed and dismissed as easily as operas by Donizetti or Bellini. They are as light and frothy as champagne. Their airs come quick to the understanding and are as soon forgotten. They excite temporarily, but they do not stimulate eternally. Suddenly, however, there comes to us a play like “Claudian,” that has a deeper meaning and a surer influence; and I should like, on the present occasion, to try and analyze my own feelings and impressions on the various occasions I have seen the play, hoping thereby in some fashion to influence those who, like most of us, are too apt to rush at the undramatic features of a literary work when it is presented on the stage and to keep away from all consideration of its after effects—its stimulating properties.

I have had the pleasure of seeing “Claudian” on three different occasions. First, under the many disadvantages of a dress rehearsal, when the performers are tired, and they have to play to the disheartening spectacle of a barren, cold, and empty house. Second, amidst the excitement and anxiety of a first night. Thirdly, with a free and undistracted mind, calm and undisturbed, with the story well in my mind, and the scenery perfectly familiar to me, away in the quiet corner of a private box where I could think and enjoy, quite undisturbed by audience, carpers, or chatterers.

The first time I was wholly occupied with the full consideration of the play and the likelihood of its quick and sudden effect upon a miscellaneous public, and a public totally unaccustomed to such thoughtful work. An experienced eye could at once detect the undramatic features, its slow digression, purely in a dramatic sense, after a prologue, which is as fine a dramatic exordium as any of us have seen for many a long year. It was easy then to see the extreme difficulty of the part of Claudian, who is fettered to a never-ending melancholy, the unsatisfactory exposition of the character of Almida, and the danger of a monotonous duet between Almida and Claudian, the riskiness of the added love-interest between Almida and Agazil, of the Tetrarch and his superfluous

sensuality, of the comic business, of the melodramatic episodes, and of many minor details. Over all, however, hung the glamour of a story, to me, personally fascinating. It was pschyology of a very entrancing kind, and I felt at the outset that there was a grand power in Wilson Barrett, a masterful spirit, a thorough identification of himself with the translated monster which, taken with scenery, groupings, and picturesque arrangements, would happily conquer and crush the empty frivolity of a ridiculing age. It was to be a battle-royal this time between men and women who think, and men and women who chaff, and I was anxious for the result.

On the second occasion, there was the acting to be considered in its varied aspects, and the scenery to be specially admired. It was the first night—a night of excitement. Nothing was to be lost ; nothing to escape the memory. It was my earnest effort and desire to draw such a picture in words of “Claudian,” as it struck the eye and excited the fancy, as would induce people to believe the next morning that Mr. Wilson Barrett and his company had been steadily engaged on a work that demanded public attention—and strong public attention—in spite of those dramatic faults of which so few plays are absolutely free. This should surely be the study of all who are honestly interested in dramatic art. Critics are born to be abused, but some descriptive power is necessary to explain and focus, as it were, the combined efforts of actor, author, scene-painter, musician, and stage-manager, and to photograph, as well as poor words can, the impression given to the last night’s house. It is a difficult work ; it is a work that cannot be done without incessant practice ; but I would venture to say, in justification of the brilliant companions with whom I have the honour to be associated, that it is a work that keeps up a hearty interest in the stage, and is fully appreciated by the public, who are superior to the jealousies of professional life. The value of a play as an opportunity for strong dramatic effect, and the consciousness that the desired effect was not wholly mastered, probably made one unusually disappointed at some of the acting. I yield to no one in my admiration of the sensitive skill of Mr. F. S. Willard ; it has been proved in many and noteworthy instances ; I would not uncharitably depreciate the talent of Mr. Frank Cooper ; indeed I can recall his acting in a little play, called “Peggy,” at the Royalty, that, of its kind, was as good as it could be ; I would not check or depress the evident earnestness of Miss Eastlake, but I still maintain that the art and skill that they possess did not find their proper scope in this particular play. Mr. Willard was called upon to play a sonorous and venerable monk, who, at the close of the prologue, has to deliver a curse that is the key-note to the whole drama. Unless every word, every syllable, and every variation of that curse rivets and enthralls the audience, the play must necessarily suffer. It must come home to everybody. It is one of the few grand dramatic moments in the play. It must be given *ore rotundo*, and with the air of inspiration. The curse is from God, and the Holy Clement is his inspired prophet. They are not the words of Mr. W. G. Wills, author, entrusted to Mr. Willard, actor, to say or speak, but, for the moment, we are to believe that this dying, murdered priest is the mouthpiece of the Almighty. Mr. Willard has, doubtless, all the intention, but he has not

the power. We must have elocution here and force, or nothing. A feeble attempt has been made to show that a dying monk, fainting from loss of blood, would not have voice or strength to curse dramatically. But that is all nonsense. We cannot cover these deficiencies of dramatic strength with specious realism. Some one attempted to do the same thing with Miss Ellen Terry's Juliet, and to argue that no Juliet ought to make a noise in the potion scene, because she would awaken the Capulets who slept in the next room! This is mere vulgarity of criticism. The curse in "Claudian" must be effectively delivered, or there is no dramatic reason for its introduction. If it is against the canons of realism to curse strongly, let the Holy Clement curse in an awful whisper, as Richelieu ought to curse. But it requires genius to curse in a whisper, and that genius is not for the moment forthcoming. Again, with Mr. Frank Cooper's Theorus, the young husband of the fair-haired slave. It was well enough, but it was not good enough for the play. It was the kind of part that would have fallen to Charles Kemble in the palmy days, a part that requires, in addition to youth, fervour, passion, poetry, and a rare abandonment to the romance of the scene. Miss Eastlake was evidently indisposed on the occasion of the first performance. She has played Almida far better since, but she cannot command her voice to the necessary utterance, and she strains one doleful key until she fatigues her audience. She has evident feeling, but no sufficient executive power. As to Mr. Charles Hudson's Tetrarch, it might, of course, have been better played by an experienced actor; but it might, on the other hand, have gone far to ruin the whole play, and cover it with ridicule. It is a quaint reproduction of the Irving manner, but it is inoffensive; on the whole, clever and uncommonly promising. Mr. Walter Speakman played Agazil in a free manly style that was very refreshing, and two small parts, played respectively by Miss Dickens and Miss Bruno, stand out by reason of the intelligence of their representatives. Mr. George Barrett and Miss Vincent got over the difficulty of the comic business with considerable cleverness. I could find no fault whatever with the Serena of Miss Emmeline Ormsby, a most graceful, poetic, and tender realization of the hunted slave-girl. The attitudes of this clever young lady are charming, and she is a picture in every scene in which she appears. Pages could be written descriptive of the beauty of the scenes, the groupings, the colour, the processions, and the music. They must be seen, however, to be appreciated. All thanks to Mr. George Godwin and to Sir Julius Benedict for their assistance. That Harvest Song is a musical gem.

But on the third visit when, as I say, the salient points of the play had been mastered, I was able to give myself up more fully to the vital principle of the play—the Claudian, as acted by Mr. Wilson Barrett. Who, then, is this Claudian? A Pagan profligate, cursed by God for his infamy and his desecration of a sanctuary, and doomed to wander until endless years, bringing misery, despair, and desolation in his weary path. It is a magnificent central idea for any play—a noble sermon, if I may so express myself. We see the sin; we see also its after sorrow. We behold the fault; we witness the atonement. A fine part requires a fine actor, and as Claudian, Mr. Wilson Barrett proves himself to be an executant and an

artist. First, as to his executive power. What we admire in it is its freedom from affectation and trick. He has a voice of exquisite tone and ringing resonance. Every word can be heard in each corner of the house. Mr. Barrett's musical declamation never wearies you. It is elocution that makes you think, and absorbs you in the central idea. Mr. Barrett has that strange combination of strength and tenderness so rarely united and so beautiful in association. His strength in the prologue is grand as that of a gladiator; his cry in the death-scene is as heart rending and pathetic as that of a stricken woman. At last we get a part of intense importance, played with all the advantages that an actor should have—voice, presence, melodious utterance, and personal charm. We have not to make excuses for this or that physical deficiency. As a man he is strong, as a lover he is tender. The artistic conception of the character is equally high. How rough and coarse a Claudian might be made in the prologue! He might have physical strength, but no refinement in manner. Morally considered, Claudian the Pagan is indefensible; but is there a woman in the audience who does not in her heart admire the grandeur of this man's hungry selfishness? Why, then, is the part so played? Not to advocate the lust of Claudians, but to show what Claudians were when Byzantium became a second Rome under the sway of Constantine. It is a true picture, so far as imagination can guide us, and the picture comes home to us when we really consider it far more in the personality of Claudian than in the colour and beauty of the scenery. This Claudian is a flesh and blood realization of old Rome. Attractively handsome, sublimely selfish, grandly defiant, tigerish in his lust, reckless in his love, the Claudian of the prologue is as fine a personation, in the true sense of the word, as any one would desire to see. It is one of those rare occasions when we can point to no living actor who would have played it or looked it nearly so well. But the Claudian of the after-play does not suffer by the contrast. It is the same man, the same noble figure, the same dignified creature, Christianized and chastened by an ever-present sorrow. If we look beyond the surface, and study closely Mr. Barrett's beautiful realization of a noble theme, we shall see how the dawning of love is the day-star of this poor haunted soul. He leans on love to free him from the dreadful curse. It is woman who must be his salvation. In his heart he cries to God to allow a woman's love to break these galling chains of immortality. Here, of course, the dramatist is wholly at fault. The love of Almida for Claudian is crudely suggested and dreamily defined. It should be more instantaneous and absolute—it should be more sudden and absorbing. It is not wholly Miss Eastlake's fault that she has to moan so incessantly and to follow her "master" more as a faithful dog than as a woman. It is the fault of the dramatist, who had not developed Almida as clearly as Claudian. But nothing could be more beautiful than Mr. Barrett's exposition of this saving power of love and the anguish of its disappointment. When I studied the play more closely I found that it was in the last act that Mr. Barrett's idea developed into what almost touches the confines of inspiration. This was the last act that, previously on behalf of the public, I had dreaded as dangerously sombre in tone and key. It is the last act of "Claudian,"

strange to say, that I best remember. This is paramount. I can admire the dramatic vigour of the prologue, but my mind in satisfaction turns to the picture of Claudian finding his way through the ruins of a fallen city, now that his love has been shattered, to summon up the ghost of the man he has murdered, and whose curse binds him to an accursed life. The spirit when it appears reveals to the tortured man the horror of his situation. The news that Almida loves him, gives him his first outburst of rapture. This then is the reward after all. Love is to conquer. Immortality with her is better than death without her. But the horribly reasoning and unresponsive ghost puts before Claudian the terror of his position. If he lives he will endure merely to torture the woman he adores. He will have satisfaction in her presence; she will have pain in his existence. To live would be to him to love; to die would be her release from blindness and a spell. And so he dies, relinquishing the love of his life and giving over Almida to the cares and distresses of a kindless world. The expression of all this intensity, its poetic significance and its enthusiastic rapture on the part of Claudian, could not have been more finely expressed than by Mr. Barrett. But the grandeur and nobility of his death only aggravate the silliness of Almida as drawn by the dramatist. She is a weak creature at the best. She with all her love at her heart returns to the prosy blacksmith, while Claudian dies a sacrifice to the love he has not tasted. It is the crucified Claudian that we pity, as with outstretched arms he demands the repose that life has utterly denied him. Carefully considered, it is a noble work, this "Claudian." The dignity of purpose and the acting of Mr. Wilson Barrett have, at any rate, put into my head the thoughts that I have so feebly and inadequately expressed.—C. S.

"PYGMALION AND GALATEA."

An Original Mythological Comedy in Three Acts, by W. S. GILBERT.
First produced at the Haymarket Theatre, on Saturday, December 9, 1871. Revived at the
Lyceum Theatre, on Saturday, December 8, 1883.

		<i>Haymarket.</i>	<i>Lyceum.</i>
Pygmalion	MR. W. H. KENDAL	MR. J. H. BARNES.
Leucippe	MR. HOWE	MR. F. H. MACKLIN.
Chrysos	MR. J. B. BUCKSTONE	MR. H. KEMBLE.
Agésimos	MR. BRAID	MR. E. T. MARCH.
Mimos	MR. WEATHERSBY	MR. ARTHUR LEWIS.
Galatea	MISS M. ROBERTSON	MISS MARY ANDERSON.
Cynisca	MISS CAROLINE HILL	MISS AMY ROSELLE.
Daphne	MISS MERTON	MISS ANNIE ROSE.

THE revival of "Pygmalion and Galatea" at the Lyceum Theatre for the sake of Miss Mary Anderson, has opened up an interesting discussion. The author and the critics are engaged in an amiable correspondence as to the correct view of Galatea, whether she should be icily statuesque or warmly human and passionate when she descends from her pedestal and mixes with ordinary mortals. The views of certain leading critics were so diametrically opposed that Mr. Gilbert was consulted in a friendly fashion as to his original intention regarding his created Galatea. It is interesting to turn back to the first printed edition of the play, which I have carefully preserved amongst my books, for there will be found a preface or dedication which many people may have forgotten. The comedy was produced on Saturday, December 9, 1871, with a cast consisting of Mr. Kendal, Mr. Howe, Mr. Buckstone, Mr. Braid, Mr. Weathersby, Miss M. Robertson, Miss Caroline Hill, Mrs. Chippendale, and Miss Merton. At that

time Mr. Gilbert was evidently vexed about the ill success of a play called "On Guard" at the Court, for he took the opportunity of alluding to it very pointedly in his preface to "Pygmalion and Galatea," and almost resented the imputation that the latter was a clever work. "'Pygmalion and Galatea,'" says Mr. Gilbert, "has succeeded at the Haymarket, not because it is a particularly good comedy (for it is full of faults) but because it was carefully rehearsed and earnestly interpreted by comedy players, and presented to a comedy audience. My ill-fated comedy 'On Guard,' which I believe to be a better piece than 'Pygmalion and Galatea'—certainly it required more trouble and thought to compose—failed ignominiously at the Court Theatre not, I believe, because it was a particularly bad comedy, but because it was pitchforked on the stage in ten days, and presented to an audience which has since developed a taste for broad burlesque. I am as convinced that 'On Guard' would have succeeded at the Haymarket as I am that 'Pygmalion and Galatea' would have been hissed off the stage at the Court."

Probably in the course of twelve years Mr. Gilbert has had reason to considerably modify these opinions. If not he can scarcely object to the crude criticism of Mr. Alma Tadema. There have been plenty of opportunities of rehearsing, revising, remodelling, and properly producing "On Guard" since 1871, but I am not aware that it has ever been able to enter the lists of comparison with "Pygmalion and Galatea" either in England, America, or any other country. The last paragraph of the preface is particularly interesting, for it runs as follows: "In the case of 'Pygmalion and Galatea,' Miss M. Robertson and Miss Caroline Hill had it in their power to make or mar the piece. I attribute its success mainly to the admirable manner in which their parts were interpreted by these ladies. I believe that it very seldom happens that an English author has the good fortune to find his carelessly-expressed intentions so carefully respected, or his crude ideas so judiciously improved upon." This is all gallant and delightful enough. For my own part, with the full memory of the original production before me, I have never seen or hope to see Galatea so well played as by Miss M. Robertson (now Mrs. Kendal), or Cynisca so finely acted as by Miss Roselle on the present occasion. Mr. Gilbert now draws the distinction between what is "artistically beautiful" and what is "dramatically effective." He gives the prize for the one quality to Miss Mary Anderson, for the other to Mrs. Kendal. But in Mrs. Kendal's "Galatea" the effect of her dramatic force never once impaired the beauty of her artistic conception. A more chaste and lovely Galatea than Miss Anderson the stage has never seen. In this character she drops her habit of attitudinizing, and abandons her self-consciousness. It is by far the best bit of art that she has shown. But I cannot agree with her, or the clever and sympathetic critics who hold, that the womanly and pathetic essence of Galatea's existence should wholly be forgotten. When the statue comes to life Galatea is a woman. Into her short life are thrust some of the most beautiful traits of woman's nature. She must love, and she must long; she must leave the world with regret and a heart-broken sigh. The scheme of the play is valueless unless the finer feelings are instantly and rapidly touched. Mr. Gilbert, whilst not wholly agreeing with Miss

Anderson's idea, has relinquished his prejudices on that point, and evidently holds with the majority of the public that Galatea can be beautifully played from two opposite points of view. Miss Anderson's performance I hold to be beautiful, but distinctly not the most beautiful that is possible. If it were mentally as powerful as it is physically chaste, it would indeed be an ideal Galatea. The hollow cry of Galatea at the close, the ghostlike, sepulchral utterance is, to my mind, wholly indefensible. I never shall forget Mrs. Kendal's wailing "Pygmalion," so full of love, so exquisitely tender, so intensely descriptive of the loss of a fair and beautiful world, and the departure into the frigidity of marble once again. I can find no fault whatever with Miss Roselle's Cynisca. It is wholly unkind and untrue to say that this clever lady merely made a success because the part was a good one. She made a success because it was a good part admirably played. Miss Roselle thoroughly understood the character in all its phases—its love, its hate, its passion and its jealousy. She showed delicacy of treatment and power at the same time, and it is only to be regretted that the recent years of this talented young lady have been so wasted as they have been. Miss Roselle would take her proper place in a literary and poetic drama. I suppose I may be considered a heretic, but I infinitely prefer Mr. H. Kemble to Mr. Buckstone in the character of Chrysos. It is far more correct in art, though it may not be so funny. I always thought Mr. Buckstone out of place in these plays. He imported a very curious meaning into very innocent lines. Nothing could be better than the Daphne of Mrs. Arthur Stirling, as good comedy as any one would desire to see.



One Day.

A FRAGMENT.

A WOMAN has one happy day in her life,
 It trips in her teens or it lags in her age,
 It glides in a calm or it stumbles in strife,
 But, oh, there is bliss in that sanctified page !

* * * * *

Ah, dream of the life of a girl of our times !

Like the cold grey stone

Is its monotone,

And dreary its songs with their burdensome rhymes.

But when comes the moment in girlhood's decade

When the lover has said, "be my wife,"

The crimson that flushes the cheek of the maid

Is the blossom of one happy day in her life.

One day for parted lips,

Tingling of finger tips,

A day for a heart that a bosom can't cover !

One day for liquid eyes,

Mingling of yearning sighs,

One day for a woman—and then life is over !

ARTHUR W. PINERO.

Our Omnibus=Box.

MR. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD tells us in one of his last amusing manifestoes that the Gaiety Theatre is the Gaiety and not the "Mausoleum." That this is so is due entirely to the writers of those "notices" that he so often sneers at when they do not suit his taste. Mr. Hollingshead was an old and clever pressman and a dramatic critic of sound and clear judgment; this is sufficient reason no doubt for his many snaps at his old trade, and cynical protests against the very opinions he invites. But he should be thankful to that portion of the Press "that wastes its valuable ink" upon him and his theatre, for keeping him up to the mark, and preventing the light and lively Gaiety from turning into that dark, dingy, witless and songless Mausoleum that it would become if left unprotected by the Press. "I have never gone out of my way to solicit newspaper support, nor have I ever interfered with a newspaper contributor in the discharge of his duty, but I have always exercised my right of answering what I considered unfair 'notices.' I hope my answers have not overstepped the bounds of fair controversy." This seems to me a distinction without a difference. To ask a man courteously to come and give a cordial opinion about a play, to invite him to his house, to send him a stall, to beg him indirectly to advertise his show as speedily as possible, and then when the opinion is not favourable, to call his guest a fool in print by means of public advertisement, is not exactly what I call non-interference with a newspaper contributor in the discharge of his duty. Has Mr. Hollingshead forgotten his advertisements when Mr. Mowbray Morris was dramatic critic of the *Times*? If so he had better refresh his memory with a back file.

The fact is, managers, like actors, want all the sweet and none of the sour. When "The Rocket" was produced the other night I conclude that Mr. Hollingshead did not object very strongly to "first-sight criticisms" or to "omens." He did not tear his hair next morning when he found that Mr. Terry had made a great success, and that the play according to all account was likely to be very popular. I have seen no manifesto from the Gaiety manager ridiculing "first-sight criticism apropos of "The Rocket;" indeed, if I mistake not, Mr. Hollingshead, an old and able journalist, has, in another place, advocated very strongly the early "notice" as news, theatrical news and necessary news. Why, then, make all this fuss, and blow all these trumpets because "The Glass of Fashion" has been played for one hundred nights "in spite of first-night omens and first-night criticisms?" Supposing the play has been successful in spite of prediction, and has satisfied the public, and not critical opinion. What then? To make such a fuss shows that the exception proves the rule of the soundness of critical judgment, and that the "first-night criticisms" must be very much appreciated, or they would not create such a stir on the mind of a practical manager.

But it would appear as if another burden were to be placed on the back of the unfortunate critic. Mr. Hollingshead has laden it sorely with his matinees which strike horror into the critic's heart, and compel him to waste hours and hours of valuable time over the sublime egotism of some of Mr. Hollingshead's patrons. As if this were not enough, the critic is now supposed to go to a dress rehearsal in addition to the first public performance. In point of fact he has to attend two performances when one would be, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, more than sufficient. The dress rehearsal mania is to me quite incomprehensible, except to plant another thorn in the critic's side. The worst of it is that if one goes the rest must go. The fraternity cannot be separated when facts are floating in the air, and plots are to be scattered for the asking. The swift journalist must suffer for the tardy, and if one critic requires to sit out a play a dozen times before he can write about it, the rest must also sit it out a dozen times. Who gains in the end it would be very difficult to say. Were the first night notices of "Claudian" so very much better than the first night notices of "The Silver King?" Upon my honour I do not think so. I would earnestly counsel managers not to encourage this bad system of inviting critics to dress rehearsals on any plea whatever. The critics ought to come in with the public, and not a minute before. I saw it stated in some paper that it was Mr. Irving who first allowed a critic to be present at a dress rehearsal, and the occasion was the first production of the Poet Laureate's play, "The Cup." It is utterly untrue. Mr. Irving never permitted a critic to be present at a dress rehearsal at his theatre then or at any other time. I have been criticizing plays off and on for over twenty years, and I never was invited to a dress rehearsal or attended one before the recent invitation in connection with "Claudian." I hope never to be invited again, for life is short and time is valuable, and when the dress rehearsal keeps one up till five o'clock in the morning, "the notice," as Mr. Hollingshead calls it, suffers when it does appear. Besides, newspaper critics do not want a double bite at any dramatic cherry. Do newspaper art critics require to see a picture gallery twice before they write about it? I doubt it. We see enough plays in the course of the year without beholding every one of them twice over. Besides, critics are not paid like doctors, by the consultation. Possibly they wish they were.

Miss Mary Anderson, whose photograph is published in this number of THE THEATRE, commenced studying for the dramatic stage when she was but thirteen years old. Three years afterwards she made her first appearance on the professional stage. This was on November 27, 1875, the theatre being Macauley's, Louisville, Kentucky, U.S.A., and the character, Juliet, in Shakespeare's tragedy. Her success in the part was considerable, and, commencing on February 20, 1876, she played a week's engagement at the same theatre, appearing as Juliet, Bianca in "Fazio," the heroine in "Evadne," and Julia in the "Hunchback." In March she played Pauline, in "The Lady of Lyons," at St. Louis, and Meg Merrilees, in "Guy Mannering," at New Orleans. Her first appearance as Parthenia was made on September 11, 1876, in San Francisco, to the Ingomar of



"What merit to be dropped on fortune's hill.
The honour is to mount it."

Alfred Rogers

Mr. John McCullough. On January 5, 1877, she appeared as Lady Macbeth at the National Theatre, Washington, and on November 11, 1878, she acted the heroine in a translation of "Berte, the Daughter of Roland," then first produced in America. In the seasons of 1877-78, she made her first appearances in Philadelphia, Boston, and New York. Her first engagement at the latter place commenced on November 16, 1878, and, in consequence of Miss Anderson's success, was extended from two into six weeks.

In the spring of 1879, Miss Anderson made her first trip across the Atlantic, and stayed for a few days at Stratford-on-Avon, where she lingered near Shakespeare's home. During this visit she also witnessed some of Mr. Irving's performances at the Lyceum, and made the acquaintance of Sara Bernhardt and Madame Ristori. During the following season she added to her repertory the Countess, in Sheridan Knowles' drama, "Love;" the heroine, in Talfourd's "Ion;" and Galatea, in Mr. Gilbert's "Pygmalion and Galatea." Miss Anderson made her first appearance on the English stage, at the Lyceum Theatre, on September 1, 1883, as Parthenia. This performance was followed, on October 27, by Pauline, and, on December 8, by Galatea.

A very interesting correspondence between Mr. W. S. Gilbert and an old friend, on the subject of Miss Mary Anderson's Galatea, has been published in the interesting *Daily News* Monday-morning column. Mr. W. S. Gilbert writes as follows:—"I have never concealed my high opinion of Mrs. Kendal's performance of Galatea, which was of course founded upon my own views, communicated to her at the rehearsal. It may therefore be taken as a fair expression of the intention I had in my mind when I wrote the play. Miss Anderson formed her idea of the character without any assistance from me, and it differs widely from Mrs. Kendal's Galatea. Admitting the correctness of Miss Anderson's conception of the part (and I do not hesitate to say that it is artistically, if not dramatically, justifiable), I cannot imagine it more beautifully realized. But, while I admit that the difference between the two Galateas is considerable, I wish it to be distinctly understood that it was with my full concurrence that Miss Anderson gave her version of the character. She was anxious to play it in London, as she had played it with singular success in America, and, with certain unimportant reservations, I agreed that she should do so. On the whole, I consider Miss Anderson's conception of the part to be artistically more beautiful, but dramatically less effective, than Mrs. Kendal's. I have never seen the part of Cynisca nearly so well played as by Miss Roselle. I have always held that Cynisca is at least as good an acting part as Galatea, and I have been held up to much ridicule for entertaining that opinion. I have been taken to task for having made the characters in the comedy talk and act like English folk of the day. This I did advisedly, and with the highest of all possible authorities at my back. It was of course open to me to construct my plan on a classical model; but I do not think such a play would have achieved

any lasting popularity." With regard to Mr. Alma Tadema's observations upon Mr. Gilbert's play in a conversation with him reported in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of Monday last, we believe we are correct in saying that Mr. Gilbert had during the rehearsals of "Pygmalion and Galatea" considered it necessary to dissuade Miss Anderson from wearing certain draperies which Mr. Alma Tadema had prescribed. In his zeal for "archæology," this distinguished authority regarding classical costume had been particularly anxious that the actress should enwrap her head in what, to the irreverent eye of the unlearned, presented the appearance of a simple "piece of white rag." Upon a trial at a dress rehearsal the effect was so generally felt to be ungraceful and likely to provoke laughter, that the author not unnaturally made a decided protest, and the idea was thereupon abandoned. It is since this incident that Mr. Alma Tadema has expressed his opinion that the play on which he has thus bestowed in vain his valuable time and learning is "clumsy and silly, with no archæological pretensions at all."

Many mistakes have been made concerning Mr. Gilbert's new play, written for Miss Anderson, and to be produced next month. The completed story on which it was founded first appeared in a Christmas annual, called "The Stage Door," which I had the pleasure to edit in 1880. It is there called "Comedy and Tragedy," and to the story is appended a footnote, "The author has taken steps to reserve to himself the right of dramatizing this story." The events take place in 1745, and the heroine is a Mdle. Céline, an actress of the Theatre Français, who is persecuted by the dissolute Duc de Richelieu. This suggestion gives an Adrienne Lecouvreur flavour to the subject, but it is wholly original. A new title will have to be secured, for there is already a play in existence called "Comedy and Tragedy."

The Carlton Dramatic Club gave their twelfth performance at St. George's Hall, on December 15. We can hardly commend the choice of the opening piece, "The Mysterious Lady." In this comedy, material for one good act has been spun out into two, and therefore requires an extra amount of briskness on the part of the performers. Unfortunately, with the exception of Mr. A. T. Frankish, whose acting in the character of Hector was most brilliant and vivacious, the others were rather heavy. Mr. H. S. Carstairs was a good Sir Amaranth, but not always audible; Mr. A. E. Drinkwater, painfully deliberate in his speeches, and Mr. J. Humphreys Parry, as Valentine, though evidently in earnest and doing his best, seemed ill at ease, and had an unfortunate trick of holding his chair up in the air; these, however, are faults easily conquered by study. The best scenes in both acts were those between Sir Amaranth, Hector, and Dorothea, though Miss Ivan Bristow is hardly up to her usual standard in this part. "Our Boys" followed with nearly the same caste as in the performance given by the Paulatin Club last May, and we might almost quote the words we used then, in recording its success. Mr. Charles C. Thomas, as Middlewick *Pere*, has toned down in the last act, and his performance of

now perfectly consistent and artistic. Mr. John Witcher replaces Mr. A. T. Frankish, as Sir Geoffrey, and it is curious to note that in this particular part both gentlemen have acted well, and both have *not* been letter perfect. The Talbot Champneys of Mr. John M. Powell is still the clever impersonation that it was, and has perhaps gained in the expression of the under-current of true feeling, during the last act. Mr. A. T. Frankish is admirably suited with the part of Charles Middlewick ; his acting was simple, earnest, and manly. Mrs. Viveash, Miss Ivan Bristowe, and Miss Kate Kenny, were simply perfect. Ladies, of course, always know best, and we are not surprised to find Miss Ivan Bristowe thinks our advice to wear less costly dresses as the poor cousin, unworthy of notice ; rich silks add nothing to her beauty, and a true artiste always attends to those details. Violet Melrose was on this occasion represented by Miss J. Findon. This was the lady's *début*, as we understand. She was nervous at first, but this rather gave a touch of Nature to her performance. Miss J. Findon is very young, and if she will only go on studying, and not rest on her first laurels, she will be an acquisition to the amateur stage.

The rumour, extensively spread in America, that Mr. Wallack had secured Mr. Terriss for his leading man, after the Irving tour is closed, is not true. Mr. Wallack was anxious for this arrangement, and approached Mr. Terriss for that purpose, but the popular young actor very sensibly elects to continue as Mr. Irving's excellent lieutenant, and will return with the company in June to play Faust in the promised version of "Faust and Marguerite," by Mr. W. G. Wills. At the same time, Mr. Terriss has become a great favourite in America, and, with but slight opportunities, has established a very valuable reputation. Luckily for him "Louis the Eleventh" has turned out the most popular play in the Irving series, and the Nemours of Mr. Terriss is naturally very much admired. But he will get a better chance when "Hamlet" and "Much Ado about Nothing" are produced in New York next April.

The great novelty and attraction promised at the Theatre du Châtelet in Paris this winter is a dramatized version of "Ignis." This excellent book has been compared to the works of Jules Verne ; but this is hardly a just appreciation of a work which, although the author is thoroughly at home with his subject, is not so much a display of science as a clever parody on *savants*. Le Comte de Chousy—the name has escaped us, but we hope the author will forgive our betraying his incognito, for the sake of our sincere admiration for his talent—Le Comte de Chousy possesses to the utmost what Verne never had any pretensions to—namely, a brilliant wit and an elegance of style, and we hope the adapters will keep his dialogue as intact as possible.

I have received a wonderful packet of songs, ballads and dances, appropriate to the Christmas season, from Messrs. Francis Brothers and Day, of Blenheim House, Oxford Street, most of which can be cordially recommended. The funny man of the evening party, the sentimental young lady

who loves a tender ballad, the dreamy young couple who enjoy a valse, and all the revellers who trip it merrily in the Lancers, will find ample scope for their pleasures by the investment of a very small capital at Blenheim House. Caroline Lowthian's "Auf Wiedersehen" Waltz has an enchanting melody, and Warwick Williams' "Fun and Frolic" Lancers will be hailed with delight at every Christmas party.

The Oxford Philothespian Club from this time forward starts with a fair wind and a flowing sail. All obstacles and prejudices are so far cleared away. The University authorities, under pressure, yielded to a very proper representation, and with the full sanction of the Vice-Chancellor, a play by Shakespeare has been performed at the Oxford Town Hall, to a brilliant assemblage. This will be the beginning of a new era in university amusements. All credit is due to Mr. Bouchier, the President of the Club, to Mr. Scott Holland, a popular "Don" at Christ Church, to Mr. Courtney of New, and other tutors for their liberal advocacy of a legitimate form of harmless amusement. Nay, more, "The Merchant of Venice" was performed so well that there can be no doubt that the readily obtained sanction will be extended. The elocution of the young actors has been highly and deservedly praised. Shakespeare's text has seldom been so intelligently presented by a mixed company of actors. For special mention I should select Mr. Bouchier as Shylock, Mr. Mackinnon as Gratiano, Mr. Morris as the Duke, Mr. Bromley Davenport as Lancelot Gobbo, and Mr. Courtney as Bassanio; of these, Mr. Bouchier is the best actor, and Mr. Morris by far the best elocutionist. In some respects Mrs. Courtney was one of the cleverest Portias I have ever seen, and I have seen a good many—Mrs. Charles Kean, Miss Mariott, Miss Atkinson, Miss Ellen Terry, &c. In the trial scene, Mrs. Courtney was in full command of her position, and acted with the confidence of an old stager. I wonder that Miss M. Price, who painted some of the scenery, had not been asked to play Nerissa. This clever young lady contented herself with singing in the glees composed by young Mr. Monckton, son of Sir John and Lady Monckton, under the direction of Mr. Angell Smith, of Christ Church. I hear that "Twelfth Night" will be put into rehearsal when the Philothespians meet at Oxford again. All so far is well, but I trust that all the Philothespians will not dream of going upon the regular stage; they will prepare themselves for an unenviable life.

A perusal of Mr. Archer's admirable article in the present number, which deals exhaustively with "Lords and Commons," and its Swedish origin, fully bears out the following defence which Mr. Pinero was scarcely called upon to make:—"With reference to some paragraphs and a letter which have appeared, having for their purport an inference that my comedy 'Lords and Commons' is founded upon a story or a play, or both, by Ouida, will you allow me to inform your readers that the incidents claimed for 'Ouida,' and which are stated to resemble my play, are to be found in the Swedish romance published certainly twenty years ago, to which I have already referred the public?—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
ARTHUR W. PINERO."

Cambridge can hardly complain of a dearth of theatrical amusement, for during the past term the A.D.C. gave their performance, as mentioned in THE THEATRE, the Girton girl-graduates played the "Electra," and last, but by no means least, the "Birds" of Aristophanes was revived after the lapse of an interval of 2,000 years. This is the second Greek play which has been represented at Cambridge, "Ajax" having been the selection last autumn. It is not necessary to give the story of the piece in detail, but simply to make a few observations on the acting, music, scenery, and general *mise-en-scène*. We may commence by at once allowing that the performance, taken as a whole, was most excellent, and reflected credit on the University that produced it and the young men who took part in it. The cast was a very large one, no less than forty-two names being mentioned in the programme, and several of the parts were doubled. To mention the chief characters :—Mr. M. R. James played very well as Peithetairos, who is on the stage nearly continuously throughout the piece, whilst in the first act he was capitably supported by Mr. H. A. Newton as Euelpides. The chorus of birds excited considerable amusement on their entrance by reason of the curious effect of their costumes, and their well-rehearsed movements and groupings showed good stage-management on the part of Mr. Waldstein. Mr. G. J. Maquay sang the music allotted to the Hoopoe in his sweetest voice, and Dr. Hubert Parry, who wrote the overture, choric odes, &c., is to be heartily congratulated on his success; whilst much praise is due to Mr. C. V. Stanford and his band, consisting of strings and wood wind-instruments only. The Parabasis might easily have been tedious but for the splendid declamation of Mr. C. Platts, for though one of the most beautiful portions of the play, it is rather lengthy, and apt to tire a modern audience. Of the other actors in the piece, the following may be selected as most meritorious :—Mr. F. R. Pryor as Hoopoe, Mr. H. J. C. Cust as Prometheus, and Mr. S. M. Leathes as Leader of the Chorus. The scenery was painted by Mr. John O'Connor, and was greatly admired, the three sets being :—Act i., a Wild Tract near Athens; act ii., in the Clouds; act iii., part of the Ramparts of Cloud-Cuckoo-borough. The costumes were designed by Mr. J. W. Clark, and executed by M. Vincent Barthe, of London. The hall was crowded on each of the performances, and special trains were run to Cambridge for the convenience of visitors. We can congratulate all concerned on the success of their efforts, but hope that the amateurs will not be carried away by a craze for producing Greek works, and so neglect English comedy. That the performances at St. Andrew's Hall have this year had the effect of lessening the interest taken in the A.D.C. we have only too much reason to fear.

These remarks by Mr. Stephen Fiske on the value of good theatrical music are extremely interesting. But what will he say when he sees the Cathedral Scene in "Much Ado about Nothing" next April?

"But, singularly enough, none of your contemporaries have noticed the manner in which Mr. Irving employs music to brighten the effects of his plays. His management of the music is as remarkable as any of the other details of the performance.

"Mr. Irving brought over from London his own orchestra leader, J. Meredith Ball. As soon as he arrived, he ordered that the orchestra of the Star Theatre should be doubled in strength, the brass comparatively reduced in number, and the strings largely augmented.

"Nearly all of Mr. Irving's acting is to music. The orchestra is almost constantly at work, as if each play were an opera. Whenever a character comes upon the stage he has his *leit motif*, as in Wagner's work. A dramatic point is emphasized by a musical chord. Music is used to impress the audience with the sadness or the gaiety of the scenes. All this is done so artistically and unobtrusively that the method is unnoticed while the effect is felt. Listen at any time during the play and you will hear the music murmuring its appropriate accompaniment to the dialogue or the situations.

"Then, behind the scenes, in Mr. Loveday's special charge, are a band of choristers who sing, every now and then, through the plays. As Mathias goes to his lonely bed, a jolly chorus outside makes him appear still more alone. As Louis XI. shudders in his solitude the merry song of a party of passing roysterers renders his solitude still more dreadful. The savagery of Shylock is contrasted with the carnival music of Venice. The muted violins mark the lots drawn by Portia's lovers. Thus, all through the Irving season, music has been called upon to assist the drama.

"This is the more noteworthy, because it is the fashion in American theatres, at present, to underrate the orchestra, and, as much as possible, to get rid of it. In fact, few of our theatres have orchestras. They have a band to make a noise between the acts, so that the scene carpenters may not be heard, and that is all the managers require of their conductors.

"The old style of orchestral accompaniment has long been laughed at or declared obsolete. The villain no longer enters to tremolo music. The hero no longer exclaims: 'Ha! (*chord*) I am here (*chord*) to foil thy schemes! (*chord*). T r-remble! (*chord*).'

"Indeed, not long ago one of our managers, anxious to be very artistic—and to save the money paid to musicians—proposed to abolish the orchestra, like the Theatre Français, and another elevated his orchestra out of sight above the stage.

"Now, Mr. Irving comes to show us how useful, how artistic, how dramatic, a theatrical orchestra may be made, without the ridiculousness of the old-fashioned melodrama. The Musical Protective Union ought to pass a vote of thanks to him, and elect him an honorary member. His example will improve our orchestral music as well as our stage-management. He has, for the first time, united music with the drama in our theatres."

This is a very interesting communication:—

"By-the-by [By-the-bye (?)] clear evidence is afforded by those same decasyllabics that Shakespeare intended the name Jaques to be sounded as a monosyllable, as in French, though not after the French pronunciation."

The foregoing is copied from the THEATRE for November, p. 238. I

am not sure that I understand the passage perfectly. I had always imagined that in French poetry Jaques, or Jacques, is a dissyllable. I find it hard to believe that Macready was unable to read blank verse properly. "Decasyllabics" is a fine word, but it is very far from covering the field of Shakespeare's versification, as Mr. Turner might find on reference to Sidney Walker's well-known book.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 "The me-lan-cho-ly Ja-ques grieves at that."

As You Like It.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 "I am Saint Ja-ques' pil-grim, thi-ther gone."

All's Well that Ends Well.

How are these lines to be explained away on the "monosyllabic" theory? The writer's words seem to imply that our poet's lines contain *ten* syllables a-piece, nor more nor less. Now, without taking the trouble to count them, I believe there are thousands of eleven and even twelve syllable verses (regular verses) in our author's plays. Here is another extract from "As You Like It":—

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 "Much mark-ed of the me-lan-cho-ly Ja-ques."

The last syllable, being unaccented, is an allowable redundancy. So in "Othello":—

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
 "The Moor al-read-y chang-es with my poi-son."

What does "A Pittite" say to this from Milton? Perhaps he calls it an alexandrine: I do not:—

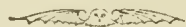
"For solitude sometimes is best society."

The highly respectable firm of Messrs. Beaumont and Fletcher, and Master Philip Massinger, present us with awfully redundant verses of even fourteen syllables!—and yet they read smoothly.

Mr. Alex. Ellis, in his famous essay on "Early English Pronunciation," part iii., prints Jaques as two syllables. The pronunciation of the name was discussed three or four years since in the columns of the *Athenæum*, and I do not think any of the correspondents who treated of the matter proposed to call the word a monosyllable. Indeed, considering the meaning attached to "jakes" in Shakespeare's time, it is most improbable that Jaques was so sounded on the stage. By the way, has Mr. Godfrey Turner ever read "The Metamorphosis of Ajax," by Sir John Harington, where the joke is: Ajax—a jakes? (See "Love's Labour Lost," v. ii.: "Your lion, that holds his poll-axe," &c., and read the variorum notes on this passage.)

A performance in aid of the Children's Convalescent Home, Tunbridge Wells, was given at St. George's Hall, on December 18, by the G. E. M. Amateur Dramatic Club. The first item on the programme was the old Adelphi farce, "My Turn Next," by Mr. G. F. La Serre, Mr. H. Marsh, Mr. F. Hahn, Mr. A. Leonard, Mrs. Viveash, Miss Viveash, and Mrs. De Salis, and went off very smoothly. The rendering of G. R. Douglass's

charming comedy, "Stage Land," was a complete success. Mr. H. Montgomery had been cast for the part of Sir Harold Trefusis, but, being too ill to appear, Mr. R. Markby delighted his auditors by his admirable and genial impersonation of the fiery and warm-hearted old soldier. But all did well—very well. We said last July that Mr. Howell Sherson had the making of a good actor in him; we also told him honestly of his failings. We are glad to find our praise can now be unqualified, and we congratulate him on his excellent interpretation of Sir Bayard. Mr. J. G. Mead and Mr. H. Griffinhoofe were first-rate representatives of their respective rôles, Miss Dora Burley very good, and Mrs. Lennox Browne as bewitching as usual. Miss Maude Millett, pretty and refined, is so natural, so fresh and pure in manner, that one pauses to think, can this be acting? This sweet maiden set many of us dreaming that night, I feel sure, and she thoroughly deserves her share of the hearty applause bestowed on all the performers.



Cela Dépend !

A SONG.

HAVE you forgot the garden where we met?
 It all depends ! you know it all depends !
 We were alone midst roses dewy wet,
 The best of friends—the dearest friends !
 The sun had set, too soon her weary way
 Down the dark lane a maiden wends :
 Will she return there where I wait some day?
 It all depends ! It all depends !

How soft the night ! can you recall the hour ?
 It all depends ! hush, dear, it all depends !
 Across your window in the ruined tow'r
 A jasmine bends—so fondly bends.
 Hark to her voice ! dim silence to despair
 Deep music lends—so sweetly lends.
 What shall I see?—her face, her hand, her hair?
 It all depends ! It all depends !

How will it end ? in sorrow or in pain ?
 It all depends, sweetheart, it all depends !
 We may be parted, we may meet again.
 It all depends ! It all depends !
 Life such as ours may be so false or true,
 So fondly false—it all depends !
 Tell me once more ! I can be true, can you ?
 It all depends ! It all depends !

C. S.

THE THEATRE.



First Nights at the Play.

MATTERS are coming to a crisis concerning first-night performances, and it is clear that there must be a reform sooner or later, if we do not desire to turn our theatres into bear-gardens, and wholly to degrade the character of English playhouses. As matters stand, every one is more or less disgusted. Managers are harassed by irritating and unprovoked disturbance; artists naturally anxious, are frightened out of their lives; and audiences have begun to look upon a "first night" in the same light as a field day at the Oxford Commemoration, when gross personalities are bandied about between the undergraduates in the gallery and the visitors in the body of the university theatre. I am the last person in the world to interfere with the legitimate right of the public to register their verdict for a play "aye" or "nay," in the most emphatic and demonstrative manner. There is no one who has a greater horror than I have of the introduction of police to overawe or terrify any audience. I hate force of any kind in a theatre. A person who hisses has no more right to be disturbed than one who applauds; provided that by hissing he does not irritate or annoy the great body of the audience. Let us have free and independent judgment by all means, let us have no clagues, no cabals, no spite, and no favouritism. Let our audiences be as unbiassed as a jury selected at hazard to try a case. These are no new doctrines on my part. I have defended the pit again and again. I have protested against the folly of the indiscreet authors who have talked about "organized opposition" and so on. I have spoken out fearlessly when I thought it right to speak out, and I have paid the penalty for my candour by being made a mark of public execration. That which is vulgarly called the "chucking-out system," I have denounced in no measured terms as an outrage, and one that cannot be defended

even in extreme and vexatious cases. If people are thrown out for hissing, they ought to be thrown out for applauding. We should then turn the theatre into the dull dumbness of a Quaker's meeting, and should depress and dispirit our artists. It is the public voice that must decide absolutely. No isolated hisser or hisses can be tolerated, and no noisy claque of applauders can be endured. The audience can protect its own interests if it likes, and ought to do so.

But does it? That is the question. I appeal to all playgoers old and young, to playgoers in all parts of the house, gallery and stalls, pit and boxes, whether first nights at the play have not for some time past lost their tone, their dignity, their force and their reverence. That is my emphatic opinion, and I have some experience in such matters, having attended first nights regularly for four-and-twenty years. It seems to me that on several first nights, and in connection with several leading plays, there has been a disposition to treat the whole thing with levity, to bring into the theatre a spirit of mischievous chaff, to come to the theatre for "a lark" as it were, and to treat these first nights as the Oxford undergraduates do the serious ceremonies of the commemoration as "a spree." An audience, even with a minority so disposed, is not in a fit disposition to judge of any work of art, be it bad or good. The orderly are borne down by the unruly. Those who come to listen patiently are not allowed to hear, and attention is distracted by rude interpolated remarks. If this be the case, and if audiences permit a first night to be the happy hunting-ground of unruly youngsters who don't care a fig for what is going on, and simply come to the play to take their money out in ridicule, let us consider what a grave injustice is done to all concerned in an important event. Think of the ladies who, having nothing to do with the theatre or its associations, come to the play and find they are exposed to ridicule and rude remark from those in their immediate vicinity; think of the indignity offered to regular first nighters and professional men who are treated with offensive familiarity and ill-timed jocularities; think of the artists on the stage naturally nervous, naturally apprehensive, laudably sensitive, whose every movement, every slip, every *gaucherie*, is pounced upon and worried by the talons and beak of ridicule; think of the wretched author who finds that his work, his anxious and favourite work, is judged not as a whole, is not viewed in any

broad or comprehensive spirit, is not condemned after patient and careful deliberation, but is caught at by the fringe, as it were, rent and mangled by its lining, and hooted and howled at for its occasional blunders and solecisms. It is the old story of the man in the red tie at the Oxford Commemoration. He may be a good fellow and faultlessly dressed otherwise, but he must not wear a red tie. An author may be a very clever fellow, but if he puts on paper a sentence capable of being twisted into a double meaning by a thoughtless and superficial audience, he has to pay the penalty in derision and cat-calls.

I do not myself believe, I never would believe, that there exists a set of dastards base and contemptible enough to band themselves together, to conspire and to organize their strength in order to condemn a play unheard, or to vent their spleen on any actor or actress. Authors are either crazy or inordinately vain who talk about conspiracies or organized opposition. They do not exist. They would be detected in an instant, and put down by the inherent strength of the audience itself. But I am not at all so sure that on many first nights an audience has not permitted to go unchecked a spirit of lawlessness and careless mischief that is very much to be deplored. When a play is, after careful consideration, shown to be bad, and approved bad by the majority, let it be hissed. When an actor plays the fool and takes liberties, let him be brought up suddenly with the whip that every audience holds in reserve. Let anything offensive, personal, or degrading be instantly condemned ; but let authors, actors, and everyone concerned, who do their best to please, be leniently treated on an occasion of grave anxiety. It is the quality of reverence that, I fear, is wanting ; it is the fault of the age, and it is shown in the playhouse as elsewhere. If the player is respected he will command attention ; if the author be earnest in his work he will be spared indignity. Too often now-a-days the artist and author alike are mere playthings, to be tossed about hither and thither by an audience utterly indifferent to the dignity of dramatic art, and presumably careless of the personal feelings of those who endeavour to amuse them.

Who, then, is to blame for the falling off in respect and reverence of such as are presumably interested in the play, and how are we to account for the want of high tone and dignity in first-night audiences, except on very special occasions, and at theatres

that command our utmost courtesy ? Many of us are to blame, and I do not hesitate to say that we journalists and writers are most of all to blame. I say we journalists and writers, for we belong to the same profession of letters whether we treat it well or ill, and those who are earnest on behalf of the drama have to throw in their lot with such as treat it and all concerning it with contempt. Since the era of smart-writing and personal talk about plays and players, the character of first nights has visibly deteriorated. When writers who describe the dresses, the colour of the hair, the shape of the features, and any striking peculiarity of well-bred and innocent women who happen to be present at the playhouse ; when journalists fill their columns with base and sometimes scurrilous chatter about notabilities who are sitting in the stalls ; when third rate actresses and outcast nobodies are translated into peeresses and peers of the realm of rowdyism ; when cruel and cowardly insinuations are printed of ladies absolutely pure and free from reproach ; when it becomes impossible for any one at all well known on first nights to move from his seat without being made the subject of offensive comment in next week's tittle-tattle ; when private conversations are peached upon by well-dressed spies and printed for the edification of a curious public ; when the theatre swarms with the agents and deputy-agents of scandalmongering chroniclers ; and when these men, these journalists, these scribes, these hangers-on, and toadies are made welcome in every theatre, invited with grovelling deference, bowed down to and courted, the more hideous and nauseous they make the atmosphere of the playhouse, how is it to be wondered at that such as read and delight in their offensive personalities should be themselves personally offensive ? The lesson of rudeness is too often taught from the master's desk. When writers who do not respect their calling insult an innocent woman, and are applauded for so doing by their fellows, is it surprising that the youngster in the pit should consider her common property and an object for his rude banter ? When the inner life of actors, actresses, authors, and first-nighters is exposed under a magnifying glass, is it astonishing that all respect for them and courtesy towards them should instantly vanish ? When authors and writers are put up in a pillory every week, and pelted with falsehood and misrepresentation ; when they, if they dare to write about the stage, are from that moment the public property of scandal-lovers, is it so very surprising that the

theatre itself should be turned into a pillory, and the playhouse the scene of "author-baiting" and public chaff? The disease that has eaten into the constitution of first-nights began when the audiences became a more favourite topic for comment than the actors, when the interior of the playhouse was more carefully described than the action on the stage; and when the public were asked to take more interest in Lady Bareacres' diamonds and Miss Montmorency's latest companion than in the play, which was not the thing at all.

For such a disease there is no cure. The age permits it and we pass on from bad to worse. Satiety and surfeit will alone bring any relief. Dog will go on eating dog until the end of time. We gradually become hardened, even to a climate of vulgarity. We pity the poor women who are attacked by cowards and have no redress. But we men who used to delight in the healthy atmosphere of the playhouse, have to take our seats with savage sullenness, our self-respect lost, and careless whether our private conversation or casual remarks are repeated or not, with or without comment. Our one idiosyncrasy is that we still love the play, even if we are not permitted to enjoy it in the old courteous fashion and like gentlemen. It cannot be surprising, however, that first nights are dreaded by those who once so eagerly looked forward to them. Women with self-respect gradually shirk them, and prefer to see a play in peace, and without notoriety; humbler folks refuse to spend money on first nights entertainments, because they are "not allowed to hear;" the pleasure of the occasion has lost its savour altogether. It being impossible to take the Irishman's advice and to play a piece for the first time on the second night, it will be for the audience itself to say how it can best protect its own interests, and see that justice is done to the poor player. That strong power every audience possesses if it cares to exercise it. Depend upon it, all art and all acting must stand paralysed if actors, authors, and playgoers have to face the terrors of first night personalities as they are at present practised in secret and in public.

C. S.



Galatea.

TWO SONNETS. INSCRIBED TO MISS MARY ANDERSON.

“Jam Galatea veni, nec munera despice nostra.”—OVID.

I.

O MEMORABLE myth so deftly made,
 To live once more for us in flowing verse,
 How do thy changing scenes for aye rehearse
 A miracle, as when in Delphic shade
 The priestess spoke, and all men were afraid :
 So now the sculptor's marble dream comes true,
 And the creator would the creature woo,
 The woman that was never child or maid.
 Pygmalion, his soul into the stone
 Breathed, and the heart was heaving in her breast ;
 But guileless Galatea made her moan,
 “The Parian were better than unrest.”
 Fool ! though thou mouldedst marble, cease thy strife,
 The gods alone can give the laws of life.

II.

Yet here when 'mid the trophies of his art,
 Pygmalion unveileth that sweet shrine,
 Where, motionless in majesty divine,
 The marble maiden waits who won his heart :
 Gladly we note the magic blushes start,
 And flood the frigid stone with hues one sees
 At sunset o'er the still Symplegades ;
 The while the wingèd archer whets his dart.
 And such the perfect picture of each phase
 Of Galatea's changeful fate, so fair
 The lifeless and the living,—idle praise
 Dies on our lips, and this is all our prayer :
 When thou art marble,—tempt no life unknown ;
 And when the woman,—nevermore be stone !

H. SAVILE CLARKE.



Back-Falls.

BY GODFREY TURNER.

BEFORE writing a word of this retrospect, but not till the pen had been dipped in ink, I foresaw that the title—which I cannot relinquish—would not cover the whole subject. Of stage-deaths, sitting, reclining, or falling prone, as well as falling backward, I may have something also to say; though the theme truly was suggested to my mind by a comparison of notes with an old play-going comrade, regarding that exceedingly simple but no doubt difficult act, a voluntary fall backward, in rigid form, from heels to shoulders. A fall of this kind—a fair fall, that is to say—is not often attempted. It is full forty years since I saw a useful actor and singer, Mr. Charles Winn, perform the feat, not exactly in the Princess's Theatre, but on the flags of the court-yard outside the stage-door of the old house. I suppose he relieved in this manner his feelings both of pride and ambition, as he never had a chance, I think, of showing his art in dying on the stage. Many a worse actor has starred in tragedy and melodrama, and has spun out his death-agonies with groans and spasms, even after the back-fall, which should have made an end on't. It was in Mr. Winn's time at the Princess's—and I beg to say, parenthetically, that a jocular story, in which some comparative allusion is made to Mother Shipton, was told of and by him in connection with Mr. Macready long and long before it was associated with a living and much-esteemed actor—it was, I say, in the now distant time of Mr. Winn that the old cast of "Werner" was for the last time recalled to the stage; Macready, John Cooper, and James Wallack appearing once more in their familiar parts. Macready's death-scene in this play was the most exhausting of all his efforts. It left him veritably prostrate, and he was often carried to his dressing-room by two of the stage-carpenters. All the dying-scenes that I remember of Macready's were marvellously effective. Those who can recollect this great actor in "Caius Gracchus" are now in a minority. The play is the most classic that Knowles ever wrote, and approaches more to the

sweetness and purity of Talfourd than anything else from the pen of the quasi-Elizabethan dramatist. Caius at the end kills himself with a dagger-thrust beneath his toga. Hunted by his rabble-foes he has taken refuge in a temple, where he finds his wife. His last words, in reply to her anxious questioning when she sees the agony in his face, are—"Nothing, my Virgilia, nothing!" And then, as the stage-direction has it, "a dagger drops from beneath his robe and he falls dead." Macready, I am told, could, and often did, "give the back-fall" in his younger days; but when I saw him in Gracchus he fell in his more usual way, "all of a heap." In Othello, when he could not give the straight back-fall with which Edmund Kean was wont to startle the house, he had a trick of his own that was nearly as telling. After the speech which ends with the self-inflicted stab, corresponding with the words, "And smote him—thus," Othello, as if to save himself from falling, clutched Montano's shoulder, and then, turning towards the bed, which was in the middle of the scene at the back of the stage, endeavoured to reach it, staggering from one piece of furniture to another. Just as it seemed that Macready had approached near enough to fling himself on the body of Desdemona, with the intention "to die upon a kiss," he sank rather than fell backwards, with his head towards the audience. The failing support of the limbs and the uncontrolled sway of the body were wonderfully death-like. Another of Macready's famous dying scenes, perhaps the most famous of all, was that of his Virginius, in which he died almost standing, with his arms round the neck of Scilius and his back to the audience. But you saw, somehow, it was death. Old actors were touched to tears; and, by-the-by, it is the greatest tribute to the memory of this tragedian's art, that he should notoriously have accomplished more in "the melting mood" than any rival in his epoch. Love, passionate or fond; love of woman, love of kindred; the love of a son for his father, of a father for his son—as when he stooped and kissed the younger man on the forehead, the latter kneeling at his feet, and the whole house stirring as with one mighty, uncontrollable sob—here it was that Macready shone. Phelps in his prime, not in his later years, came very near him, especially in depicting a stern and rugged nature broken unwillingly into sorrow, or the recall of tender affection. Macready could never have played

Job Thornberry or Old Dornton as Phelps played them. Nor was Phelps in William Tell ever the equal of Macready. But to the back-fall. It used to be practised a good deal at "the Wells." I don't say this irreverently, for if the stage was ever abreast with those liberal arts which soften and humanize, it was during the long sway of Phelps over the land of Clerkenwell. Justice has never yet been done to that bright period in the history of Sadler's Wells. But it did so happen that every actor who could fall flat and stiff on his back, gloried in dying so, on that little stage. The first time I saw Mr. Creswick act in London, was in the character of Cassius, to the Brutus of Phelps, and the Mark Antony of Henry Marston; and I remember he finished the part with a surprisingly perfect back-fall. George Bennett, who played the fanatic, Fenton, in the Rev. J. White's play, "John Saville of Haysted," closed one of the earlier acts—on the first night at all events—with a back-fall, which was rather an anti-climax; for every one in the audience thought this very dead-drop was meant to finish Fenton out of the way. Bennett was called to the foot-lights; a rather unusual compliment, in those times, to a dead person in the middle of a piece. His resuscitation in the next act came with the dull shock of an unintelligible surprise; and I have never been able to understand what possible excuse George Bennett, a heavy man, could have had for introducing a fit of catalepsy at that particular part of the performance. There was no warrant for it in the text that I could discover. But the ideas of "business" with some actors are peculiar. There is a story—skip it if you have already heard it too often—of a certain pantomimist whose favourite feat, in monkey-parts, was running on all fours round the gallery. Being once cast for the wild man in "Valentine and Orson," he was extremely desirous of introducing this bit of athletic by-play. The manager, somehow, could not see an opening for it. But when the piece was being read, and the point was reached where the Oracle says, "Orson is endowed with reason!" the acrobat exclaimed, with much animation, "There you are! That's my cue! 'Reason!' Then I runs round the front!" Is it a grave injustice to a sterling actor of the old school—to one who could play tragedy in the most legitimate and respectable manner, without drawing a tear, and who has rarely been equalled since John Emery, in Caliban and Sir Toby Belch—if I suppose that the fascination of the back-

fall overcame his better judgment, so that a lamer cue than "Reason" sufficed with him for indulging in his favourite "bit of fat?"

The late Mr. Samuel Emery, a most picturesque actor, as famous for his by-play as for his make-up, always died cleverly on the stage. He could fall anyhow—except clumsily. His death in "The Creole," a drama by Shirley Brooks, produced under Keeley's management at the Lyceum, with Keeley himself and his incomparable wife, and Leigh Murray, and a generally strong cast, by all of whom full justice was rendered to some exceedingly crisp, bright, and dramatic writing, was a point not soon to fade out of memory. A not uncommon error had been made in the name of this play. A "creole" is not, as nine English people in ten suppose, and as the author of that three-act play supposed, a half-caste, a quadroon, octoroon, or other person with more or less black blood in his veins. The original Spanish word, "criollo," signified any white person—any person, that is to say, of pure white descent—born in an island of the West Indies. It positively excluded those of mixed birth, who are now erroneously implied in its designation. In the English governed islands of the Antilles at the present day, in Jamaica, Barbadoes, Trinidad, St. Vincent, Grenada, Tobago, Antigua, and the rest, "creole" means anybody and almost anything, irrespective of colour, but simply native to the place. Thus, there are creole whites and creole negroes—negroes, that is to say, born on the island, and not brought from Africa; there are creole horses, mules, and oxen; there are creole fruits and creole woods—the creole mahogany of Jamaica, for instance, being the cheapest timber in the island, and such as the roughest floors are commonly made of. You will pardon me this digression, which you may indulgently connect with the subject of stage-deaths, because I am about to speak of Mr. Samuel Emery's dying scene in "The Creole." The clever actor, who some few years earlier had made a starring entrance to theatrical life as the son of the great John Emery, and his successor in the representation of Yorkshiremen—the John Brodie of Mr. Samuel Emery was a hearty piece of humorous acting—played the dusky villain in the Lyceum piece, Keeley impersonating a Jew of the comic and kindly type. In the end, Emery (I forget the name of his part in the play) gets the reward of villainy by being run through the middle in a duel

with small swords. The encounter is supposed to occur off the scene, but near at hand. Its grim termination is dramatically shown. Emery, without coat or vest, and in the whitest of linen, is carried head foremost on the shoulders of four men, from the left upper entrance to the front of the stage, and placed in a chair. He rises to his feet, turns a dying look of *undying* hate on his rival, and falls dead. The fall was indescribably real and startling. He seemed to die on his feet ; and then he fell forward, as if he would come across the footlights : so it appeared to me, sitting, on the first night of the piece, in front of the good old Lyceum pit ; but, before reaching the ground, the body turned half over towards the right, doubling up into a heap as it came down, and fell with a lifeless thud on the outside of the right upper arm. This was far more natural than a rigid back-fall. It reminded me somewhat of the death of Conanchet, the Indian, in "The Wept of the Wishton Wish," when O. Smith played that part at the Adelphi. Conanchet is shot ; and, knowing beforehand that this is to be his fate, spreads out his arms, presenting his breast to the aim, and makes a little speech—how well I remember the tones of that unearthly voice !—closing with some such words as "Conanchet knows how to die." If Conanchet did not know how to die, from a dramatic as well as a realistic point of view, O. Smith did. He sprang into the air, just as I have seen men spring when shot in earnest, and fell, as I must again say, in a heap ; nor is there any phrase more apt and graphic to describe the death-fall. Did you ever, my old, or elderly, or somewhat more than middle-aged reader, see this fine melodramatic actor die as Grampus in "The Wreck Ashore?" I have recently, in this magazine, aired my affectionate recollections of this Buckstonian piece, with Mrs. Yates and Mrs. Fitzwilliam as Alice and Bella. But a few more words may be permitted me. That scene, one of the best in all melodrama, in which the wounded and dying smuggler, who has crawled to the lonely cottage, appeals to the two frightened women, in whom pity, terror, and suspicion contend for mastery, before they unbar the door, demands a special class of acting, now rare. I doubt, and will not be laughed out of doubting, whether "The Wreck Ashore," could be played now with a fraction of its original effect. Miles Bertram, played by Yates—who would play anything, for have I not seen him, on one and the same night, act this character and a man with a black

eye in a farce?—would now be given to a mere stick. Yates! His dying scenes were as good as O. Smith's. Unfortunately, he would not only play anything—a commendable abnegation of self—but he would play *in* anything, and wasted his splendid powers too often on trash and downright garbage. A falsely sentimental and utterly despicable drama, of the arsenical species, "Madame Laffarge," founded on a Parisian *cause célèbre*, of which the vile criminality of a wife furnished the gravamen, was produced in an evil day at the Adelphi, soon after the trial; and I am sorry to say that Monsieur and Madame Laffarge were played by Mr. and Mrs. Yates. But the acting was as good as the piece was bad. Alfred Wigan, who followed Frédéric Lemaître pretty closely in "The Ile de St. Tropez," died a stage-death, with the same symptoms of poisoning as those simulated by Yates. Wigan, who made up his face with the ashes of burnt writing-paper, forgot to make up his ears, leaving them, by their healthy natural tinge, to betray his negligent omission. He was reminded of it, too late for rectifying the strange blunder, by the present Duke of Wellington.

A notable stage-fall, not a back-fall, but quite as acrobatic a performance, was Fechter's, in "Robert Macaire," when he is shot at the head of the staircase. The fall was from top to bottom, and had the appearance of being headlong. Watching a second time to see how it was done, I observed that when Robert was shot, he instantly bent sideways and clutched the handrail of the bannister. Then, with a writhing contortion of pain, he brought the other hand forward on the rail, and, keeping his feet still on the top stair, slid both his hands down as far as he could, bringing his head lower and lower till it was somewhat beneath the level of his heels. The rest was an easy jump to a lower stair, within one or two of the bottom. Here he fell, and then rolled down to the stage. No doubt the whole series of movements had been practised till they could be rapidly, precisely, and safely executed, and the effect was that of an unpremeditated fall. Coming still nearer to time present, I shall only instance the picturesque death of Sinnatus, in "The Cup." Mr. Terriss preluded his fall from the dagger thrust turned against him by Synorix, with a swift and astonishingly agile bound down the rocky steps. After the struggle, which ends in his being stabbed, he falls back on the rock, and rolls down to the stage, as Fechter rolled off the stair,

and as Madame Sarah Bernhardt, in "Fédora," has since been in the habit of rolling off a couch. There! I guarded myself at the beginning, please remember, against any fair censure, on account of not sticking to the letter of my text—Back-falls.

And now, let me conclude this gossip with a back-fall on my own account, if it be one to confess an error; and it is well for me that I find no difficulty in saying the words, "I was wrong," for Heaven knows this has often enough been my predicament. I do not find it quite so easy to declare that they were wrong whose judgment I honoured, and who are in their graves; but a correspondent has cogently reasoned me out of a position which I could only have maintained by stubbornly and blindly maintaining that they were right. And I cannot hesitate a moment longer in avowing that my monosyllabic treatment of the name Jaques, as it is written by Shakespeare, is an absurd error; an error in which I have strayed for many years, with what I will call a reverential thoughtlessness; an error which I now thoughtfully but not, I trust, less reverentially, relinquish.



Autumn Leaves.

FROM purple clouds the red sun cleaves,
Through soft wet air that's warm and mellow:
Rustle, rustle the falling leaves,
Crimson-red, and brown, and yellow.

The blackbird laughs in her earth-close flight,
The owl looks down with solemn glance;
While through the soft November light,
The leaves whirl round in a mystic dance.

The crimson flash of the dying sun
Is caught in the dew-drop upon the ground;
Little they care for the day that is done,—
Fairy leaves frisking and dancing around.

Quivering yet upon oak and beech,
Shivering still upon ash and thorn :
Flickering, fluttering, fading,—each
Frayed and failing, and all forlorn.

The West Wind flings them about in play,
What do they care for fear or fret?
Have they not lived their summer day?
One last short dance ere their gold is wet.

Leaves like the floating thoughts of all—
Loves, and fancies, and hopes, and fears—
Bright in their Spring-time, but in the Fall
Their golden gladness is wet with tears.

We, too, laugh in our strong Spring-time,—
Play out our Summer till Autumn grieves;
And so I weave you into my rhyme,
Shimmering shower of falling leaves.

Shall I take me a text from this moss-clad root,
With the green half-hidden by brown and red?
Shall I end my song with a girl's light foot,
And her quick, sharp step on the gravel-bed?

Or build me fancies of girl and boy,
Like a playwright twisting a tangled plot?
Nay, rustling leaves have no tune of joy—
I know their music : I sing it not.

In gentle eddies around my head
They float and fall : 'tis a secret sign
Of the end. Nay, whisper, when I am dead,
Lie light, dear leaves, on her heart and mine.

FRÈRE SAUVAGE.

Lough Corrib, November, 1883



Our Musical-Box.

"PRINCESS IDA ; OR, CASTLE ADAMANT."

A Respectful Operatic per-version of TENNYSON'S "Princess," in a Prologue and two Acts, written by W. S. GILBERT, composed by ARTHUR SULLIVAN. First produced at the Savoy Theatre, under the management of MR. R. D'OYLY CARTE, on Saturday, January 5th, 1884.

Mr. GILBERT'S play, "The Princess," was produced at the Olympic Theatre, on January 8th, 1870.

Savoy, 1884.

Olympic, 1870.

King Hildebrand ...	MR. RUTLAND BARRINGTON	MR. DAVID FISHER.
Hilarion ...	MR. H. BRACY	MISS MARIA SIMPSON.
Cyril ...	MR. DURWARD LEBY	MISS AUGUSTA THOMPSON.
Florian ...	MR. RYLEY	MISS MONTGOMERY.
King Gama ...	MR. GEORGE GROSSMITH	MR. ELLIOTT.
Arac ...	MR. R. TEMPLE	MISS JESSIE EARLE.
Guron ...	MR. LUGG	MISS HARRINGTON.
Scynthius ...	MR. W. GREY	MISS EWELL.
Princess Ida ...	MISS LEONORA BRAHAM	MISS MATTIE REINHARDT.
Lady Blanche ...	MISS BRANDRAM	MRS. POYNTER.
Lady Psyche ...	MISS CHARD	MISS FANNY ADDISON.
Melissa ...	MISS JESSIE BOND	MISS PATTI JOSEPHS.
Sacharissa ...	MISS SYBIL GREY	MISS ALMA MURRAY.
Chloe ...	MISS HEATHCOTE	MISS NOARE.
Ada ...	MISS TWYNAM	MISS CLYFORD.

"NEVER prophesy unless you know," is an axiom the observance of which renders vaticination in the case of an opera, the joint work of Gilbert and Sullivan, and produced at the Savoy Theatre by D'Oyly Carte, a safe and agreeable feat. The success of such a novelty is invariably a foregone conclusion ; what, in theatrical parlance, is called "a great go" may always be counted upon, or, for the matter of that, discounted in the way of infallible forecast. How, indeed, should it be otherwise ? The "book" is by one of the subtlest humorists in Europe ; the music by a composer who is a veritable Good Fairy's godchild, endowed with every sort of charming gift ; the management of the theatre in which the work is brought out spares no pains or expense in producing it, and is in the hands of men justly distinguished for artistic culture and taste ; finally, the theatre itself is the prettiest and most comfortable house in London. Under these conditions, essential and accessorial, failure—or even that mitigated recognition of indisputable merit known as a *succès d'estime*—is out of the question whenever the forces and attractions above alluded to are combined anew for public delectation.

In recording the absolute and unalloyed success—success, that is to say, from the point of view of everybody financially and executively concerned therein—of the "Princess Ida" on the occasion of its production, I am simply chronicling an accomplished fact with which every reader of this magazine has long since been made acquainted by my *confrères* of the daily and weekly press. The "Princess Ida" is a "great go," in many respects it deserves to be so. It will probably run for a year, keeping the Savoy treasury agreeably replete all the while. All London will flock to hear it ; so will our provincial and American cousins and Continental visitors ; copies of its words and music will be sold by tens of thousands ; everybody connected with its creation, production and performance will have "a good time," I feel assured, for at least a twelvemonth to come. So

mote it be ! The opera is so far above the level of all other entertainments, *ejusdem generis*, actually before the London public that it fully deserves the prosperity in store for it. Still, I cannot pronounce it to be in any way an improvement upon its predecessors, the offspring of Messrs. Gilbert and Sullivan's amalgamated talents. To me, music and words alike reveal symptoms of fatigue in their respective composer and author. Arthur Sullivan cannot write otherwise than in a manner pleasing to the ear and satisfactory to the intelligence ; but more than one number of "Princess Ida" is lacking in the freshness, spontaneity and *entrain* that lent so fascinating a charm to the melodies of the "Pirates," "Patience," and "Iolanthe"—not to hark back to the "Sorcerer" (the best of his operatic works) or to "Pinafore" (the most universally popular). W. S. Gilbert, in the libretto just given to the world, abundantly proves that he is still the legitimate monarch of the Realm of Topsyturveydom ; but his incongruities are more elaborately worked up than of yore, and therefore less laughter-moving. Moreover, the story of the play is, on the whole, a dull one, deficient in incident and quite forlorn of surprises. It may be summed up in a few words. A wilful girl persuades herself that female supremacy is feasible ; she tries the experiment, and it fails. That is all. The plot has scarcely opened when the audience knows how it must end, which circumstance robs it of all the interest that is born of uncertainty and kept alive by suspense. In the exposition of his heroine's doctrines, too, Mr. Gilbert is more diffuse than is compatible with sustained enjoyment on the part of his hearers—even of those amongst them who revel in antithesis, and take intellectual delight in clever special pleading and subtle sophistry. Imitation abstract philosophy, didactically set forth by a muddle-headed female wind-bag, like the Lady Blanche of Mr. Gilbert's Female University, is scarcely less tiresome on the stage than the genuine article is in the lecture-room ; and even his wealth of humour is unavailing to make transcendental grammar funny. Such lines (there are many of them) as

" Yet humble second shall be first, I ween,
And dead and buried be the curst Has Been,"

may be most aptly characterized by an excerpt from one of their author's inimitable "Bab Ballads," commenting upon a supposititious Tupperian proverb thus :—

" Which I knew was very clever—but I didn't understand it."

In connection with the character of Lady Blanche—which might be eliminated from the opera without causing any sensible prejudice to that work—Mr. Gilbert has written a perplexing lyric, the first verse of which exhibits a strange disregard for euphony, as well as for the convenience of the singer and comfort of the hearer. The terminal word of its every line, save one, is strongly sibilant. It is extremely difficult to write singable words in our language that are inoffensive to the ear ; our sibilants are almost as unmanageable and obtrusive as the German gutturals, and have been the bane of many an accomplished British vocalist ; but, surely, to so skilled and felicitous a song writer as Mr. Gilbert, it should be feasible to

arrange his lines in such sort that nine out of ten should not end in a hiss. The verse alluded to is in every way a poor one, and I am surprised that Arthur Sullivan should have consented to set it. One of its lines—"Time weaves my coronal"—is absolutely meaningless; "coronal," too, is barbarously made to rhyme to "shall," and "was," scarcely less so, to "cause." The words of this ill-considered song seem to have exercised a depressing influence upon the composer, whose setting of them is curiously cold and tame. On the whole, "Come mighty Must" is a blemish on a work of great beauty and grace, and should be excised without hesitation.

A similar operation might be advantageously performed upon Hilarion's ballad (Prologue), "Ida was a twelvemonth old," the words of which are painstaking twaddle, whilst the melody is so inveterately commonplace that Arthur Sullivan's most fervent admirers—amongst whom I claim a foremost place—experience some difficulty in believing that "he can really have meant it." The setting of this sorry text conclusively demonstrates the imprudence of assigning two or three successive or sequent notes to one open monosyllable, when writing for singers whose voices have not been properly trained, and who are therefore physically incapable of passing from one note to another without sub-iterating the vowel in an inartistic and, consequently, disagreeable manner. It is hard upon an average English operetta singer—who, as a rule, knows next to nothing about voice-production or management—to put him or her through such an ordeal as that prescribed to Mr. Bracy by the words and music of "Ida was a twelvemonth old."

The more scholarly element in the Savoy audiences will probably take exception to Mr. Gilbert's unwonted recklessness in arbitrarily making accent subservient to rhymes, conspicuously instanced in some lines sung by Lady Psyche towards the commencement of act i. Putting correctness of scanning out of the question, as possibly not essential to the construction of comic verse, it is surely inelegant to coerce "Helicon" into rhyming with "Anacreon," "Metamorphoses" with "Aristophanes," and—*horresco referens*!—"Juvenal" with "all." My grumbling at the libretto is nearly at an end. But before turning to the pleasanter part of what I conceive to be my duty towards "Princess Ida," I must take leave to point out three absurdities in acts i. and ii., which Mr. Gilbert, in the interest of his deservedly great reputation as a humorist, would do well to expunge from his text with more than lightning-like promptitude. In the otherwise admirable words of the trio sung by Ida's bellicose brethren, expectant of execution, the lines occur:

"We don't fear death, of course—we're taught
To shame it."

Death, figuratively speaking, may be braved, defied, scorned, met with courage or the reverse; but it cannot possibly be shamed. That is a feat of which the most indomitable hero, if exhorted to perform it, would be compelled to confess himself incapable. Again, King Gama, when taunted by his daughter with his pusillanimity, exclaims:

"I am possessed
By the pale devil of a shaking heart!"

Confusion of metaphor makes sheer nonsense of this utterance. The frightened monarch might just as plausibly claim to be possessed by the green phantom of a crawling liver. Finally, whilst the "combat of six" is being fought out in the castle-yard (act ii.), ladies and soldiers, picturesquely grouped upon the battlements, sing (*entr'autres*) in chorus :

" We ought to bless her brothers' swords,
And piously ejaculate
Oh, Hungary !
Oh, Hungary !"

Why "Hungary," I humbly ask? Up to the moment at which this astounding invocation is pronounced, with scarcely less amazing unanimity, by the rival hosts of Hildebrand and Ida, the author has not even so much as hinted to us that Castle Adamant is situate in the Realm of the Five Rivers. Barely ten minutes before the final fall of the curtain—and for no conceivable reason connected with the story of the play—he informs us that Gama and his sons are Magyars to a man. But stay : can it be that Mr. Gilbert confers this nationality upon one of his two Royal Families in order to obtain a rhyme for the word "ironmongery," which occurs later on in the above-quoted verse? It must be ; but I contend that such a *pis-aller* is scarcely worthy of so facile and fertile a rhymester.

Let me now say that some of the keenest "points" and most perfect puns ever achieved by our greatest cotemporary expert in "word-plays" are to be found in the book of "Princess Ida." Speaking of the girl-graduates as matches for youthful lovers, King Gama says :—

" They're safety matches, sir,
And they light only on the knowledge-box—
So *you've* no chance !"

A little further on, describing the extravagances of his daughter's misanthropy, he exclaims :—

" She's so particular,
She'll scarcely suffer Dr. Watts's *hymns*,
And all the animals she owns are "hers."

Both Gama's songs are in Mr. Gilbert's best Bab-Ballad manner ; no higher praise can be accorded to them. The whole conception of Ida's three dull-witted, thewy brothers is genuinely humorous, and there is a laugh in almost every line they have to sing. A song divided between Hilarion and Cyril (act i.), and containing a "chaffing" sketch of the educational programme obtaining at Castle Adamant, teems with delicate *badinage*, and is a very *mitrailleuse* of funniments. So is a song assigned to Lady Psyche, and intituled "The Ape and the Lady." The words, too, of a duet between Melissa and Lady Blanche, "Now wouldn't you like to rule the roast"—words which have suggested the musical gem of the opera to its composer—are charmingly quaint and "tripping on the tongue." I shall be much surprised if Cyril's song, "Would you know the kind of maid," does not prove as triumphant a favourite in the drawing-room as it already is in the theatre ; nothing so dainty and delicious has been heard in London for many a day. Hilarion has a capital song, "Some years ago," towards the

close of act i., written with all the "go" that makes Mr. Gilbert's comic lyrics so irresistibly exhilarating whenever he allows sheer high spirits to run away with him; and Melissa's humorous solo (with chorus), "Thus our courage" (act ii.), is delightfully feminine and *naïf*. In short, Mr. Gilbert has never produced better work than in some of the lyrics of "Princess Ida." That the dialogue, in places, is laborious and even dull, is probably rather the fault of the play's subject than of its author.

The melodies of this opera, sweetly and often seductively as they fall upon the ear, are not, with one or two conspicuous exceptions, characterized by striking originality. This, however, cannot be said of the instrumentation, which abounds in novel treatments and subtle devices, bearing witness, times without number, to Arthur Sullivan's inexhaustible fertility of invention in such matters. As a writer of apt and beautiful accompaniments to the voice, he is unrivalled by any living composer. His acquaintance with the tone-resources of the orchestra is exhaustive; his capacity for utilizing them unlimited. From beginning to end the instrumental parts of "Princess Ida" are fraught with enchanting combinations and joyful surprises. "Iolanthe" herself was not more graceful, fantastic, and fascinating in this particular respect. In the choruses of his latest opera Sullivan has breathed his richest musical vein. It was a chorus "If she come here" that drew the first encore at the *première*; and the *finale* of the Prologue, "For a month to dwell" (trio and chorus) if not the best number in that division of the work, is unquestionably the most effective. Act ii. opens and closes, moreover, with choruses, each admirable in its way. A healthy ambition in the direction of conception and treatment, such as are more suitable to grand opera than to operetta, is displayed and justified in the heroine's aria, "At this my call." The quartette in act i., "The world is but a broken toy," is simply charming; that it was not redemanded on the first night greatly surprised and disappointed me. Of the inimitable duet in the same act, with its refreshing terminal "Reminiscence of Rameau," I have already expressed my unqualified admiration; and the *finale* (act i.), an elaborate composition, is in every way meritorious.

"Princess Ida" is powerfully cast and effectively performed. Great credit is due to Miss Braham for accepting a part somewhat too "heavy" for her physical *moyens*, and to George Grossmith for undertaking a *rôle* that relegates him to secondary importance. Both these excellent artists discharge their more or less ungrateful tasks with consummate ability, Miss Braham's intelligent and forcible declamation of a somewhat tedious monologue being above all praise. The chief vocal success of the opera was unquestionably achieved by Mr. Lely, whose accomplished voice-production was a real treat to all the musicians present. In other respects the distinct "hit" of the evening was made by Miss Bond, in the small part of Melissa, which she invested with captivating interest. Such chorus-singing as that of the Savoy company cannot be heard in any Continental opera-house with which I am acquainted. It is perfection. I cannot speak too highly of the services rendered by the orchestra; they deserve unqualified praise. As to the scenery, costumes, and appointments, every London theatre-goer knows what the Savoy management is capable

of in the way of tasteful arrangements behind the curtain, intelligent attention to detail and generous expenditure. The three "sets" of "Princess Ida" (especially the second) are amongst the most beautiful pictures ever exhibited upon any stage. The "graduate" robes and Amazonian armour must be seen to be properly appreciated; the former are gravely gorgeous, the latter indescribably brilliant and splendid. The first performance was an ideal one. Everybody was letter-perfect in his or her words, and note-perfect in the music; the stage management was a miracle of efficiency, and the piece went as faultlessly as if it had been running the three hundred or so nights that are before it in what metaphysical Lady Blanche calls "The Inevitable Must."

WM. BEATTY-KINGSTON.

"THE PIPER OF HAMELIN."

A Romantic Grand Opera, in Five Acts, by VICTOR E. NESSLER, adapted from "Die Rattenfaenger von Hamelin," by HENRY HERSEE. Originally produced at the Queen's Theatre, Manchester, on November 16th, 1882. Produced, for the first time in London, at Covent Garden Theatre, on Monday, January 7th, 1884, with the following cast:—

Hunold Singuf ...	MR. JAMES SAUVAGE.	Wulff	MR. ARTHUR ROUSBEY.
Gruwelholt	MR. ALBERT M'GUCKIN.	Kesselring	MR. EDWARD GRIFFIN.
Sunneborne	MR. VICTOR ROBERTS.	Regina	MISSE CATH. DEVRIENT.
Ethelorus	MR. CHARLES LYALL.	Dorothea	MISS HELEN ARMSTRONG.
Rhynperg	MR. E. MULLER.	Marguerite	MISS BEAMISH.
Heribert	MR. JOSEPH PIERPOINT.	Gertrude	MADAME ROSE HERSEE.

USE is second nature; and the English public are accustomed to see children's books dramatized in connection with Christmas pantomimes, not with grand opera. Even fairy tales, when humoristically topsyturvied by Mr. Gilbert, are not yet accepted in this country as suitable texts for operatic works of the "grand" category. They may furnish plots for glorified operetta, such as grateful millions have been rejoiced with at the Opéra Comique and Savoy during the past decade or so; but they are out of place, except as spectacular introductions to a harlequinade, upon the boards of Her Majesty's, Covent Garden or Drury Lane. On this account Nessler's "Rattenfaenger von Hamelin," although a meritorious work duly provided with "continuous melody," highly-coloured orchestration and other fashionable characteristics of the modern "Tone-Play" cannot but appear an anomaly to British audiences; chiefly because it is produced in a theatre popularly associated with the received and approved models of Grand Opera, and because it puts forward pretensions which, rightly or wrongly, we are not accustomed to recognize on the part of a nursery story. We lack the power of dissociating subject from treatment, or perhaps the ponderous triviality, that enables German audiences to sanction German composers' choice of such chimney-corner myths as "Hans Heiling," "Der Vampyr," or "Der Rattenfaenger von Hamelin" for their *libretti*. This is probably why "Freischuetz" and "Oberon," despite their surpassing musical beauty, are so seldom played in London; and may account in part for the utter failure of the "Nibelung's Ring" to obtain public favour. Its devil-gods and idiot-sirens did not correspond to our notions of what operatic characters ought to be; nor did the "whelming worm" himself, with his speaking-trumpet and safety-valve,

strike us as the sort of *basso-profundo* we could ever sincerely wish to hear again.

Belonging, as it does, to the category of *Maerchen*, or Nursery Tales, "The Piper of Hamelin's" prospects of achieving solid popularity in England would have been but slender, had it been, musically speaking, a far more intrinsically attractive work than it really is. Its numbers, however, though uniformly well written and pleasing to the ear, seldom rise above mediocrity, whilst its personages are one and all unsympathetic. Though judiciously cut by those who have adapted it for the English stage, it is still too long, in relation to its musical and dramatic value. I heard it the year before last, unpruned, in Hamburg, and shall not readily forget how desperately it bored me, although the cast was absolutely unexceptionable, and Rosa Sucher sustained the part of Gertrude, as only she, of all living *prime-donne*, can sing and act. But it was dull throughout; deadly dull; and so it is at Covent Garden. Even the rat-charming scene lacked vivacity and *élan*, though to be sure the mechanical rats of the Altona Stadt Theatre did manage to keep their feet whilst crossing the stage on suicidal thoughts intent, whereas the Covent Garden rodents—a good many of them at least—make their final pilgrimage in a wallowing attitude, on their sides, too manifestly obedient to traction brought to bear upon them from the wings. In other respects the piece is better set and mounted than it was at Hamburg. That is nearly all I can conscientiously say in favour of the Covent Garden version, production, and performance. But what I can say I will, leaving condemnations and protests to the imagination of THE THEATRE'S readers.

Mr. Sauvage acts the part of Hunold Singuf with laudable spirit and intelligence. He also sings the music correctly and agreeably, being gifted with a tuneful voice and correct ear. It is, perhaps, needless to say that the gifted and versatile Charles Lyall makes the most of a small comic part (Ethelerus), and is, whenever on the stage, a laughter-moving relief to the general dulness of the action. Miss Helen Armstrong deserves cordial recognition and unqualified praise for her excellent rendering of Dorothea. She is a clever, conscientious, and rising young singer. I have no doubt that a bright professional future awaits her in connection with the lyric drama. The chorus-singing is slightly above the Covent Garden average; the orchestra does its work steadily and efficiently. "The rest is silence."

WM. BEATTY-KINGSTON.



Three Kisses.

AN angel with three lilies in her hand,
Came winging to the earth from Paradise,
They changed to kisses ere she reached love's land,
And fell upon the brow, the lips, the eyes !

First was the kiss of purity and peace—
Lonely they sat together by the fire—
To him from sorrow came a dear release :
To her, the shadow of a dim desire.
Two aimless souls had ceased their wandering,
Two fettered spirits struggled to be free ;
To sweet love's garden came the blossoming,
The tender leaf unfolded on love's tree,
The Kiss of Sanctity !

Next was the kiss of soul bound into soul—
They stood at night beneath a ruined tower—
Dimly they heard the waves eternal roll,
Life was embodied in a single hour !
The one strong moment in a love divine,
The present shadowing futurity ;
No fate, no time, no terror could combine
To rob that silence of its ecstasy,
The Kiss of Unity

Last came the kiss of dear love perfected,
Sad in the chamber of the thing called Death !
Two tapers at the feet, two at the head,
The murmured prayer, the low half-sobbing breath.
But brighter yet in distance far away,
A gathered army of the souls that live,
The golden dawn of a transcendent day,
When angels of the lilies come to give
The Kiss—Eternity !

C. S.

January, 1884.



Our Play-Box.

"THE THREE HATS."

A Farical Comedy, in Three Acts, adapted by OWEN DOVE and ALFRED MALTBY, from "Les Trois Chapeaux" of ALFRED HENNEQUIN. Produced, for the first time in London, at the Royalty Theatre, on Thursday, December 20, 1883.

Mr. Pullett... ..	MR. ROBERT BROUGH.	Mike	MR. C. H. STEPHENSON.
Hector Chablis... ..	MR. EARLE L. DOUGLAS.	Mrs. Pullett	MRS. CECIL.
Gilbert Orme	MR. WALTER EVERARD.	Mabel	MISS T. HASTINGS.
Mons. St. Germain... ..	MR. OWEN DOVE.	Bliff	MISS ROSE BLANCHARD.

"THE Three Hats" is a version of M. Alfred Hennequin's Palais Royal farce, "Les Trois Chapeaux." Its initial representation was given at Bath on June 22 last year. The play is not very brilliant, but it serves its purpose. The idea of the piece is this: A husband, taking advantage of his wife's absence, leaves home at night, and, in an altercation, takes in mistake the hat of an eccentric writing-master, leaving his own as a substitute. He is tracked to a house by the loser of the hat, and the fun hinges upon the unfortunate writing-master being mistaken for an "æsthetic" poet and the father of a young girl who had been taken out to supper by the before-mentioned husband. At the best, this is but a poor idea, but it has been indifferently treated by the adaptors. The leading character is the writing-master, who, as represented by Mr. Owen Dove, is like nothing in Nature. If Mr. Dove's conception of the part can be accepted by the spectator, then much enjoyment may be the result, for the actor is undeniably funny though painfully grotesque.

LOTTA.

Lotta first appeared in a Dramatic Story, in Three Acts, by F. MARSDEN, called "Musette," at the Opera Comique Theatre, on Saturday, December 22, 1883. Lotta subsequently appeared in a version of the "Old Curiosity Shop," by CHARLES DICKENS the younger.

Musette	MISS LOTTA.	Billy Bokus... ..	MR. GEORGE HOWARD.
Adelanta	MR. JAMES FERNANDEZ.	Timothy Tilters... ..	MR. T. J. MERRIDEW.
Sir Hugh Tracy, Bart.	MR. ARTHUR DACRE.	Maud	MISS KATE BISHOP.
Philip Darcy	MR. HOWARD RUSSELL.	Mrs. Selina Bokus	MISS FANNY COLEMAN.
Algernon Bokus, Esq.	MR. ARTHUR WOOD.	Angela... ..	MISS F. TREVELYAN.

THE *amende honorable* has been quickly paid to our lively and clever little friend, Lotta, who, at the Opera Comique, has established herself very quickly as a public favourite. She fell a victim, at the outset, to a hymn-tune, but has now been pardoned through the good offices of Charles Dickens. Lotta, it is needless to say, is the idol of the American public. She is the spoiled child of our friendly cousins. They have loved her since her infancy, they like her pranks and pretty ways, they admire her spasmodic eccentricity, and, by their patronage, they have made her happy and prosperous. But Lotta is an exception to the old rule that governs the conduct of spoiled children. She is extremely grateful for all that has been done for her, and she is an ambitious little artist. Having conquered the hearts and alienated the prejudices of the whole continent of America, from New York to San Francisco, Lotta was very anxious, as all clever Americans are, to play in England. Again and again she has half-promised

to appear, but she was nervous, fearful—and hesitated. At last the deed has been done, and Lotta has been winning her way to permanent popularity every day and every hour.

Her lucky star deserted her at the outset. She elected to appear in a wretched play called “Musette.” She brought over with her an actor whose notions of humour differed from our own, and, in an unguarded moment, she sang a hymn-tune that is supposed to be as sacred as the Bible itself to certain psalm-singing patrons of the drama. Poor Lotta paid the penalty of her mistake, and had to encounter a storm of opposition when she delivered, with all the innocence in the world, “The Sweet By-and-By.” For the moment, all courtesy to a stranger and all consideration for a woman were forgotten; and, with the fear of Moody, Sankey, and General Booth before their eyes, the righteous audience howled at Lotta, and punched one another’s heads in the gallery with truly Christian resignation. I never remember such a scene in a theatre. Half the people were fretting and fuming about the luckless hymn-tune, and the rest were blackening one another’s eyes in the name of religion. “Musette” was voted an irredeemable failure, and Lotta would have been drowned but for the presence of mind of the gallant Mr. Harry Jackson, her Napoleonic manager.

Mr. Harry Jackson is a diplomatist. He knew that Lotta’s Marchioness would take the town because of its indescribable quaintness; but there was an obstacle to the Marchioness even more formidable than the consecrated hymn-tune. If evangelists adore their “Sweet By-and-By,” novel-readers swear by their Dickens. The best possible proof that Dickens is the most undramatic of novelists is, that he never dramatized his own works. No one knew more about the drama, and no one was more angry when his plays were put on the stage. If the best dramatist who ever wore shoe-leather handled Dickens for the stage, he would be told he was an impertinent fellow; he would be scolded for injuring “immortal creations,” and so on. Now, if there is one book less dramatic than the rest, it is “The Old Curiosity Shop.” It is impossible to get a consistent play out of it without omitting one or other favourite. Mr. Harry Jackson, with that hymn-tune episode before his eyes, was apprehensive about John Brougham’s version of the book, that Lotta had been in the habit of playing, for Brougham had added considerably to Dickens, and had been guilty of several heresies. The Marchioness with a banjo would have been a red rag even worse than Moody and Sankey’s hymn-tune. So the manager did the very best thing to disarm prejudice, and to shelter “Lotta.” He got a new version of the play from the son of Charles Dickens, oil was poured on the troubled waters, the storm abated, and “Lotta” became an immediate success. Lotta’s Marchioness is a performance *sui generis*. It is outside the domain of serious criticism. It is a thing of itself, to be seen and laughed at. It is the quaintest, oddest conception in the world, and though it may be heresy to say so, her “break-down” is the funniest thing ever done in comic dancing. The scene between Swiveller and the Marchioness was the making of the play, which is, as all the Dickens’ plays must be, a procession of various well-known characters. Two things struck me whilst I was watching these scenes,

particularly that of the banquet in Brass's kitchen. First of all, what a wonderful Dick Swiveller Henry Irving would make; and, secondly, how is it that Lotta's Marchioness reminds me so often in grimace and grotesqueness of a certain clever clown called "Little Sandy." She squirms, walks off, runs away, and noddles her pointed cap exactly like Sandy in the circus. Lotta is for the most part admirably assisted. Mr. Wyatt as Swiveller was first rate, an excellent touch of character acting; and Mr. Pateman was simply Quilp come to life. Nothing better of its kind has ever been seen than this mischievous dwarf as played by Mr. Pateman. He has the fiendishness of a malignant demon and the attitudes of an ape. Lotta's face, as she sits on the kitchen-table eyeing that dreadful mutton-bone, haunts one. No words can describe the fantastic tricks of the actress. She is a curiosity, and well worth seeing.

GALATEA; OR, PYGMALION RE-VERSED.

A Burlesque, in One Scene, by H. P. STEPHENS. Produced at the Gaiety Theatre, on Wednesday afternoon, December 26, 1883.

Galatea... ..	MISS E. FARREN.	Cyniscos	MR. W. ELTON.
Myrine	MISS C. GILCHRIST.	Chrysos	MR. E. J. HENLEY.
Daphne	MISS MAUD TAYLOR.	Leucippe	MISS PHYLLIS BROUGHTON.
Pygmalion	MR. E. TERRY.		

QUICK to seize upon the opportunity for burlesquing a popular subject, Mr. H. P. Stephens has taken advantage of Miss Mary Anderson's successful appearance as Galatea, in order to produce a skit upon Pygmalion and the animated statue. Mr. Stephens laid the one scene of his satire in Galatea's studio, for, as may be inferred from the title of the burlesque, Pygmalion and Galatea now change characters, and Galatea becomes the love-sick sculptor, whilst Pygmalion is, of course, the statue. Miss Farren naturally appears as Galatea, and brings all her well-known powers to bear upon the impersonation. She is as merry and bright as ever, and she infuses much humour into the few songs which fall to her lot. Her make-up is also capital, and her head-gear is a wonderful burlesque of Miss Anderson's appearance as Parthenia. To the ever-popular comedian, Mr. Edward Terry, is allotted the part of Pygmalion, and, almost needless to say, he extracts from it all the fun that is possible. Those who know Mr. Terry's inimitable command of expression, may easily imagine how comical he looks when posed on the pedestal, while he listens to Galatea's impassioned appeal to the gods for his life. Mr. Terry gains unlimited laughter by his quaint rendering of the character, and his complete success as Pygmalion is assured. Miss Constance Gilchrist is Myrine, a pretty part, and one that affords the actress considerable scope. Miss Gilchrist improves in every new character she plays, and as Myrine she is seen to very considerable advantage. She sings and dances most tastefully. Miss Maud Taylor makes a pretty and interesting Daphne, and Miss Phyllis Broughton is good as Leucippe. Mr. W. Elton is an exceedingly comical Cyniscos, and Mr. E. J. Henley is funny as Chrysos. The music is capital, and has, of course, been arranged and composed by Herr Meyer Lütz.

“A MINT OF MONEY.”

An Original Farical Comedy, in Three Acts, written by ARTHUR LAW. Produced at Toole's Theatre, on Thursday, January 10, 1884.

Kerosine Tredgold...	MR. J. L. TOOLE.	Monday Flutterby...	MISS RACHEL.
Gregory Grindell ...	MR. JOHN BILLINGTON.	Tuesday Flutterby...	MISS FLORENCE RAYBURN.
Charles Cyclone ...	MR. E. D. WARD.	Wednesday Flutterby	MISS MARY LESTER.
Tupley	MR. W. CHEESMAN.	Thursday Flutterby	MISS MARIE LINDEN.
Inspector Sharpcut	MR. MCKENZIE.	Friday Flutterby ...	MISS WOLSELEY.
Policeman... ..	MR. JAMES.	Saturday Flutterby	MISS KATE CARLYON.
William	MR. BRUNTON.	Mary Maybud ...	MISS ELY KEMPSTER.
Cornelius O'Blather	MR. GEORGE SHELTON.	Sparky	MISS BELLA WALLIS.
Mrs. Flutterby ...	MISS EMILY THORNE.	Medusa	MISS ERSKINE.

MR. ARTHUR LAW, if he has not written a very startling play, has at any rate put that favourite actor, Mr. J. L. Toole, in a series of comical situations. In the present instance he appears as a well-favoured millionaire, who is the hope and pride of a match-making mamma, blest (or curst) with no less than six eligible daughters. To see Mr. Toole flirting and philandering with each Miss Flutterby in succession is, to use an old saying, “as good as a play.” But the butterfly-bachelor is eventually caught, and nearly subjugated, by a strong-minded female—half-mesmerist and half-adventuress—who, with her vulgar brother (the counterpart of the brother and sister in Augier's “*L'Aventurière*”), sponge upon the good-natured little gentleman, and reduce him to a moral jelly. Irritated at his position, and fairly driven wild by the Irish brother, the distracted Kerosine Tredgold locks his disagreeable visitor up in a coal-cellar, and is supposed to have been an accessory to the crime of manslaughter in causing the premature death of his objectionable friend. So the volatile and versatile Kerosine flies from the clutches of the law, gets up into a tree to escape, like a certain English king, where he hears such disagreeable things said of him by Mrs. Flutterby and her daughters, that the millionaire determines to marry a poor relative of these gushing girls, instead of choosing a wife from their own family circle. Mr. Toole is naturally the life and soul of such a play, and he receives competent assistance from Mr. John Billington, Miss Emily Thorne, and Mr. E. D. Ward. Miss Erskine and Mr. Shelton are both very clever as the adventurers, and Miss Marie Linden once more shows that she is certainly one of the actresses of the future. The play is excellently mounted, the stage is bright and attractive, and the patrons of this merry little playhouse are looking forward to Mr. Burnand's parody of “*Claudian*,” which has been some time in rehearsal.

“LOW WATER.”

An Original Comedy, in Three Acts, written by A. W. PINERO. Produced at the Globe Theatre, on Saturday, January 12, 1884.

Lord George Ormolu ...	MR. CHARLES CART- WRIGHT.	Rev. Mr. Charlsworthy	MR. FRANK EVANS.
Mr. Vereker, Q.C. ...	MR. CARTON.	Dr. Medwin	MR. HARRY LEIGH.
Captain Todhunter ...	MR. R. DARTREY.	Mr. Passmore... ..	MR. RICHARDSON.
Mr. Algernon Linklater	MR. J. F. YOUNG.	Shillister	MR. E. W. GARDINER.
Josey	MR. E. H. BELL.	Slowman	MR. A. CHEVALIER.
Dicky Smallpage	MR. J. L. SHINE.	Servant	MR. W. GUISE.
Chevalier de Montgallett	MR. C. A. SMILY.	Anne... ..	MISS COMPTON.
Mr. Dottridge	MR. T. SQUIRE.	Rosamund	MISS ABINGTON.
		Miss Butterworth...	MISS MARIA DALY.

THERE is little use in crying over spilt milk. Mr. Pinero's last play is dead, and by this time decently buried. I must say that I did not think so badly of it as many people did, for the story as it stood was to me interesting enough, and many of the scenes were capable,

in good hands, of strong dramatic expression. It was the old tale—but never worn out—of the idol of the household tempted and betrayed by a weak but not wholly bad man, who not only repents and returns to her home, but through her gentleness becomes the wife of the man who had once petulantly deserted her. In the exposition of the dawn of this love between guileless woman and hesitating man, the author showed more real power, originality, and insight of character than in any other of the plays he has given us, and at the outset I expected great things from “*Low Water*.” What I certainly did not expect to be told was, that such a story was immoral! It has been seriously argued that it is an indelicate and uncommendable thing to allow a fallen woman to be promoted to the hierarchy of matrimony—on the stage. What next, and next? Mr. Pinero has drawn few characters so true to Nature as “*Beauty*” Linklater and Lord George Ormolu in this unfortunate play. From the point of view of acting, he has given us few more effective characters than the “*Major*,” a strong-minded but affectionate young woman, who rules everybody except herself; or than her pretentious old father, whose silly head is turned at the idea of his being father-in-law to a peer’s son. But these two last characters were not so well understood or effectively worked out by Miss Compton and Mr. J. F. Young as were the two lovers of Miss Abington and Mr. Cartwright. The only really striking bit of acting in the whole play was Mr. Vereker, Q.C., by Mr. Carton. Had this occurred in a comedy that hit the public, the fortune of a young actor would be made, as a sharp exponent of natural character, with a manner singularly effective and decisive. But Mr. Carton is unlucky. The fault, the crying fault, of “*Low Water*” was, however, Mr. Pinero’s original sin of laughing at all sentiment, and ridiculing the pathetic situations he has himself invented. He irritates his audience to madness, and he will fail, and go on failing, so long as he neglects to study the principles of dramatic effect. It is no use for any author to cry with one side of his face and to grin with the other. We will sympathize with his tears and listen to his jokes, each in their proper place; but when we take his hand in sympathy and he bursts out laughing in our face, we think he is making a fool of us, and we resent it accordingly. Still, for all that, I was prepared to admit much excellence in “*Low Water*,” had it not been for this extraordinary document that appeared the morning after the play was produced, and secured its complete failure more emphatically than any first-night chaff or hisses. A play may recover from a shock of first-night unpopularity, but not from a letter written by the author disclaiming any credit for or merit in his own invention. This was Mr. Pinero’s letter that greeted the expectant public on the Monday morning at breakfast time :—

“I am anxious that the ‘first-night’ play-going public—at whose hands I have from time to time received so much generous encouragement—should know that they are not indebted wholly to me for the trial of their patience to which they were subjected last night. ‘*Low Water*’ has been produced at the Globe Theatre in direct opposition to my wishes—in spite of my most earnest protests. The control of the play unfortunately passed out of my hands a long time ago, and all my endeavours to prevent its performance, under conditions which I knew would result in the com-

plete obscuring of the meaning of my work, were of no avail. I shall venture on some occasion in the future to present 'Low Water' to the public in a manner which shall give form and expression to my ideas. In the meantime I hope the play may be speedily forgotten.

"I am, Sir, faithfully yours,

"ARTHUR PINERO."

There are certain pretentious egotists who consider that it is a sign of idiocy to defend the good points of a play that has been condemned by the public, and disclaimed by its author. I don't, and I shall continue to do so in spite of the "blow-flies" of journalism, who taint everything they touch.

"THE PALACE OF TRUTH."

A Fairy Comedy, in Three Acts, by W. S. Gilbert. Revived, on the occasion of the opening of the Prince's Theatre, on Friday, January 18, 1884.
First acted at the Haymarket Theatre, on Saturday, November 17, 1870.

	<i>Prince's.</i>	<i>Haymarket.</i>
King Phanor...	MR. G. W. ANSON	MR. BUCKSTONE.
Prince Philamir ...	MR. KYRLE BELLEW	MR. KENDAL.
Chrysal ...	MR. H. BEERBOHM-TREE	MR. EVERILL.
Zoram ...	MR. GEORGE TEMPLE	MR. CLARK.
Aristacus ...	MR. BRAGGINGTON	MR. ROGERS.
Gélanor ...	MR. JOHN MACLEAN	MR. BRAID.
Queen Altemire ...	MISS FLORENCE MARRYAT	MRS. CHIPPENDALE.
Princess Zéolide ...	MISS LINGARD	MISS MADGE ROBERTSON.
Mirza ...	MISS SOPHIE EYRE	MISS CAROLINE HILL.
Palmis ...	MISS ARNOLD	MISS FANNY WRIGHT.
Azèma ...	MISS TILBURY	MISS FANNY GWYNNE.

TAKE note that on Friday, the 18th of January, 1884, was opened for the first time to the public another new theatre, and certainly one of the very prettiest in all London. It is called the "Prince's." It is situated at the corner of Oxenden Street and Coventry Street, Leicester Square, in one of the most important thoroughfares of the metropolis, and it has been built by Mr. Edgar Bruce at an enormous cost. I fear that there will be some confusion between the Prince's, the Princess's, and the Prince of Wales's, and already cabmen have begun to think that Mr. Edgar Bruce's new theatre is, like the old one, the Prince of Wales's Theatre. "Why not the Prince of Wales's?" said I to Mr. Phipps, the architect. "The new theatre is called after the Prince of Wales, the feathers adorn his box, and he is known to have given his special patronage and countenance to Mr. Edgar Bruce." "For the best of all reasons, that the title of the Prince of Wales's Theatre," answered Mr. Phipps, "does not belong to Mr. Bancroft, or Mr. Bruce, or to any individual, but is vested in the closed building in the little street off the Tottenham Court Road that was condemned by the Metropolitan Board of Works." "But surely," I replied, "the old theatre will never be rebuilt as such, and the title is valueless to the owners." "On the contrary," added the energetic architect, "the Prince of Wales's Theatre will be rebuilt, and by me in all probability, without much delay." The thought of another theatre made me shudder. At the present moment we have not plays enough or artists enough for the theatres already built, and yet we are to have the promised Pandora in Leicester Square and the rebuilt Prince of Wales's in the Tottenham Court Road. In its appointments and detail each new theatre is found



"You are—you are—you know you are!"

IMPULSE.

H. H. Kendal

more luxurious than the last. Mr. Bruce's new theatre surpasses everything that the playgoer ever conceived possible in the way of comfort. Lounges, corridors, fountains, ferns, drawing-rooms, retiring-rooms, smoking-rooms, annexes, marble halls and staircases, Moorish decorations and so on satisfy, at the same time, the lazy and the luxurious. What an age of extravagance it is in which we live. We are bidden to three-and-sixpenny dinners in palaces that would have satisfied an ancient emperor, and our playhouses rival the marble castles of fairy kings.

The commercial policy of this extravagant outlay I never could thoroughly understand. I conclude it is done for advertisement, and that people would rather dine amidst marble and gilding than in a more humble apartment, and that the play is more enjoyable when it is approached over Mosaic pavements, amidst frescoes and surrounded by lazy luxury. I should have thought that it was the worst managerial policy in the world to tempt your visitors away from the contemplation of the stage, and to make them more comfortable in the retiring rooms than when sitting in their seats. I should have feared that it would make the spectator languid and indifferent, too much inclined for conversation, flirting and cigarette-smoking, and for prolonging inside the theatre the conviviality of the dinner-table. I should have imagined it would make the audience late in getting back to their seats and so have disturbed the artists on the stage. It surely must jeopardize the interest of a good play and arrest its excitement to tempt the audience away to flower-gardens, grottoes, ferneries, conversation-rooms, picture-galleries and smoke-rooms, instead of waiting anxiously for the uplifting of the curtain. But managers think differently, and have apparently studied the effeminate and sauntering habits of the age. The theatre becomes the most popular that is the smartest, and the outside show is considered more important than the actual entertainment. I hope managers will not ultimately discover that they have contributed materially to the languid indifference of the times and catered only too successfully for the scornful and the blasé.

The method of the playing of "The Palace of Truth" by artists of more than ordinary intelligence, has occasioned very general surprise, particularly when it was whispered about that Mr. W. S. Gilbert, the author, had superintended the rehearsals and given his sanction to the stage management, which at various points of the first act utterly destroyed the meaning of the poem. All the characters in this pretty and ingenious play are strongly marked and purposely designed, as a means of showing a strong contrast between people as they are and people as they seem to be. "The Palace of Truth" is one gigantic mirror which shows up the true nature of everyone. Zéolide, the heroine, is no exception to this rule; indeed she is the strongest contrast of all. She, in the first act, is made cold, unimpassioned and mysterious, in order to reveal her in the Palace as a most devoted, pure, and tender-hearted woman. As to the method of acting Zéolide in the earlier scenes of the play there can be no question. We do not need to recall Mrs. Kendal's admirable personation to find out the key-note of the creation. The author has written it down for us and emphasized it again and again. What does her mother Altamire say of this strange and unaccountable being?

“Phanor, you are blind!
 Why see how coldly Zéolide receives
 His songs of love—his bursts of metaphor.
 “I love you, Philamir,” and there’s an end.
 She will vouchsafe her spouse elect no more,
 No tenderness—no reciprocity,
 A cold, half-sullen and half-wayward smile,
 And that is all. The maiden lavishes
 More love upon her horse.”

With these clear directions before her, however, Miss Lingard—apparently with the author’s sanction—gives us a Princess Zéolide who cannot restrain her enthusiasm or the transport of her passion. A love more patent on the surface or demonstrative it would be impossible to show. There is not the least doubt that Zéolide, instead of being reserved and full of maiden modesty, is as forward a coquette as it is possible to conceive. Mr. Kyrle Bellew is guilty of the same mistake. There is no hesitation or doubt in his love; it is never tinged with the slightest suspicion of despair. It is not a pleading love, but one absolutely satisfied. No nervous apprehension ever disturbs him; he does not doubt that Zéolide loves him, and he cares to do little else but enjoy his prize. These extraordinary mis-readings of character as clear as daylight, are carried to a pitch of absurdity by the stage management at the close of act i., which brings Zéolide and Prince Philamir together making frantic love on a marble step, and enjoying an embrace that is only shared by midsummer lovers.

The situation is clear enough. The Prince says, when he is describing in an ecstatic fashion the daily life at the Palace of Truth—

“I’ll give the key-note. We will pass the day
 By quivering willows at the waterside,
 Lapped in a lazy luxury of love,
 There we’ll forget the world of work-a-day,
 And crown our happiness with songs of love.”

But this is all imaginative rapture. The Prince is in doubt. He must have some one with him to share all this. So *he turns*, evidently turns, to Zéolide, who stands apart—or sits apart—or is materially divided from her—

“What say you, dearest Zéolide?”

Her answer gives her character, and shows its purpose—

“I’ve said
 As much as it is maidenly to say,
 I love you, Philamir—be satisfied !”

Now, how can any such conversation, expressing doubt and anxiety, take place between two young people in the rapture of a love embrace and entirely wrapped up in themselves? And what are we to say of the stage management that permits a noisy band, with coarse strains, to interrupt these all-important words? Such an artistic blunder is wholly incomprehensible to me. All was changed when Miss Lingard and Mr. Kyrle Bellew got into the Palace of Truth. They then acted extremely well. Miss Sophie Eyre played Mirza with much dramatic force, and carried the

audience away with her in the great storm of passion ; elsewhere the character would have borne a more gentle treatment and refining touch. Mr Beerbohm-Tree gave good service as the sycophantic Chrysal ; but the best acting in the play came from Miss Tilbury, a daughter of Lydia Thompson, as Azema. Miss Arnold was an altogether charming and expressive Palmis. I see there is no doubt about Mr. Gilbert's sanction being given to the curious readings that came under notice, for on the programme it is stated that the "Palace of Truth" "was produced under the personal superintendence of the author." It had the effect of depressing instead of stimulating the first-night audience. Miss Helen Matthews is in the company, and she plays very charmingly in Mr. Grundy's pretty play, "In Honour Bound."



Snap.

A SOUVENIR OF BOYHOOD.

BY J. PALGRAVE SIMPSON.

"GOOD gracious ! what's that ?" said Charley Mountain to me, starting back, and pointing to a singular object above our heads.

We were standing in one of the most splendid Gothic halls in England—the so-called St. Andrew's Hall, in Norwich. I had been explaining to my friend, Charley Mountain, to whom I was doing cicerone in the interesting old city—the city connected with all my early boyish dreams of the romantic and the picturesque—how the magnificent hall, in which we stood, had belonged, in times long gone by, to a monastery of Dominicans, and had been the nave of their church, or, as some antiquarians, with enormous appetites, will have it, simply the refectory of the monastery ; and how, in succeeding ages, it had been used as a splendid civic hall, the walls of which were adorned by pictures—and very fine pictures, too—representing all the great worthies of the county of Norfolk and the city of Norwich, and where important meetings were held in the present day, great concerts and certain festivities given, and the glories of the triennial Norwich Musical Festival duly set forth. In the very midst of my lucid archæological exposition of all the attractions of the magnificent St. Andrew's Hall, in which I certainly felt a certain degree of pride, I was rudely interrupted by Charley's sudden exclamation : "Good

gracious! what's that?" as he pointed to a large gallery at the entrance end of the hall.

The object which had elicited this burst of astonishment was certainly a singular one. It bore the life-like semblance of an enormous dragon, with its extensive body covered by scales of green and gold, expanded wings of the same style, a hideous head, the eyes of which seemed to glare with ferocity, and a long protruding tail, coquettishly curled round at the further end, as if to mitigate the tragic aspect of the monster by a spice of comic humour. The creature was certainly sufficiently surprising, and even appalling in appearance, to startle a novice. To me it was an old and familiar friend.

"That? Why, that's Snap!" I replied, laughing.

"And who the deuce is Snap?" inquired Charley Mountain, "and why is he endowed with that snappish name?"

"He is a relic of an old mediæval pageant," I said, recommencing my archæological lecture. "He is supposed to have been brought into the world for the purpose of performing an important part in the mystery of 'St. George and the Dragon.' You see, my dear old boy, that realism in dramatic representations is by no means the original hobby of the present day; although, very likely, the purists of old times objected to St. George and his Dragon as a desecration of the fine old pious and religious mysteries of *their* 'palmy days,' in which personages of a far more elevated rank in the heavenly hierarchy were introduced to play the principal parts. These *laudoteres temporis acti* probably never paused to consider on which side the desecration lay. The more modern spectacular and realistic mystery of 'St. George and the Dragon' must have been very popular, however, since the principal figure has been preserved through many centuries to the present day, and is still able to assert its own indisputable attractions. Judge for yourself; there he is! But come up into the gallery, and inspect the formidable monster more closely. He won't bite, although, as a little boy, I was firmly impressed with the idea that he could and would, if he were approached too nearly—he was so life-like in all his movements, don't you see? I shall never forget the pride which thrilled through my boyish heart when I was at length persuaded to pat the dreaded monster on the back. Alas! now he is a mere soulless carcase, without the inner life to animate him. But come! even the carcase of 'Snap' is more worth inspection than many an Egyptian mummy."

We mounted into the gallery, where the monster stood in his whole length, supported on strong wooden tressels.

"Solid as he looks," I proceeded ; "the interior organization of his body consists only of light wicker-work, which is covered with painted canvas. The large projecting wings, and the gigantic tail are of more durable materials, of course. They are both works of art ; but it is in his head that the greatest art is to be found. The neck, you see, is shrivelled up close to the creature's shoulders. But by the mechanism of a pole within, it can be shot out nearly six feet, while by another internal mechanical arrangement, the jaws of the monster may be made to move up and down. It was the sudden protrusion of that long neck, combined with the clashing of the fearful iron teeth, which was the terror of my childhood whenever the horrible monster took his walks abroad ; and in my early days these walks were a matter of tolerably frequent occurrence. The quick opening and shutting of the jaws, as the head rushed forward, leering maliciously from side to side gave, I fancy, the name of 'Snap' to the popular street performer. Little boys, as I remember to my cost, had the firm conviction that their heads would be 'snapped' off if they ventured within reach of those formidable teeth."

"But how Master Snap could have 'taken his walks abroad,' as you say, passes my comprehension," said Charley, with a sceptical smile.

"Your comprehension is limited, I fear, my dear boy," I replied. "There was once life in the animal, now so inert. Stretch your mind to imagine inside the dead carcase an arrangement of straps and other supports, by which the body, so bulky in appearance, and yet comparatively so light, might be balanced and supported on the shoulders of a living man. Imagine the human legs, which would naturally protrude from the body, covered with tight nether garments, painted so as to represent a dragon's legs and claws. Set the bearer in motion—let him use the internal mechanism connected with the neck and head—and there you have an animated Snap, who was permitted to parade the old streets of Norwich on high days and holidays, and who exercised the privilege with striking and even formidable effect.

"Far from losing in position, when the days of the 'Mysteries' ceased, and Saint George required his dragon no more, 'Snap' rose considerably in social status. He became a civic official, and

was attached to the court of the Mayor. He was appointed to accompany his Worship on all State occasions of special dignity and pomp. When the Mayor's procession was formed on grand days of ceremony to walk from the Guildhall in the Market Place to the Cathedral, through some of the principal streets of the city, Snap was to the fore, and had important functions to undertake; and these functions he zealously performed through long long years, until a cruel Corporation Reform Act crushed the attractive city pageant, and relegated the important official to an ignominious obscurity on those tressels.

"Snap in those picturesque days was necessarily 'the observed of all observers.' It was he who headed the procession, and most materially cleared the way for their worships, the mayor, aldermen, sheriffs, and other dignitaries of the Corporation. His formidable head was thrust against any obstructors of his path, while his teeth gnashed defiance of them. His tremendous tail swept round in contrary direction and struck obtruding heads with no little severity. The exercise of Snap's functions was one to be dreaded and avoided; and yet the beast was popular—very popular; and great were the lamentations of the citizens of Norwich when the attractive civic pageant ceased, and Snap was seen no more.

"In my eyes, as a boy, no pageant could be more picturesque than the procession of the civic dignitaries to the cathedral—and such a cathedral as is that of Norwich. It had a charm of mediæval romance about it; and I was entranced. I daresay that you, my dear old Charley, so imbued with the spirit of the modern scoffer of romance, will simply be bored with my description of my cherished pageant. You won't? well, let's sit here, and I will tell you all about it." By this time we were again in the gorgeous Gothic hall, surrounded by portraits of the civic worthies.

"Snap, as I have already intimated, led the way. He was followed by four quaint functionaries, called 'Whifflers,' whose duty it was to clear the passage for the worshipful and right worshipful personages who were making their way along the streets; as if Snap had not already done the work effectually. These Whifflers were attired in mediæval dresses—two of rose-coloured silk and two of blue—and had in their hands sharp pointed swords, which they flourished round and round to keep

back the crowd, and flung up into the air to catch them, as they fell, by the hilt, with all the rapidity and adroitness of Japanese jugglers.

“Next came two black-robed officials bearing poles, tipped with little silver castles—then the mace-bearers, similarly attired, carrying two heavy gold maces of elaborate workmanship—formidable weapons in themselves, had they been used in a fray for purposes of skull-cracking—and followed by the bearer of the so-called ‘little mace’ of smaller dimensions, which had been bestowed on the Corporation of Norwich by Queen Elizabeth, in return for some good service, and was a very sweet little thing in its way. Then the sword-bearer, who combined, as far as I can recollect, the functions of City Chamberlain, holding aloft the gorgeous Sword of State, in its scabbard of crimson velvet, bedizened with gold. Next marched the Town Clerk in robes of black silk, profusely adorned with black frogs and tassels ; then the two Sheriffs in robes of purple befurred and decorated with gold chains. Those who followed were the Aldermen, all dressed in heavy scarlet gowns, some of them wearing their gowns ‘with a difference’—inasmuch as they were adorned with a splendid sort of *soutane* of peach-coloured silk in front. These were the Aldermen who had ‘passed the chair,’ and had enjoyed their dignity of mayoralty. At last came the great civic dignitary himself, chiefly distinguishable by the heavy and gorgeous gold chains which hung around him, and dazzled the eyes of neophytes. Yes! my dear Charley, the pageant, take it all in all, was a splendid and most imposing one ; and at all events it seemed so to me in my boyhood’s days. To my mind the actors, Whiffler, were far more attractive than the stolid knights in armour of ‘The Lord Mayor’s Show’ in London, and the animated dragon far more alluring than the heavy lifeless forms of Gog and Magog. It impressed me with a solemn awe, when, after defiling through the quaint old streets, the procession passed under a magnificent old Gothic archway, and at last reached the Cathedral gates. They were closed ; but there was a magic ‘Open Sesame’ to come. The bearers of the castle-topped poles, struck the gates three times, and they were flung open as if by enchantment. It seemed to me the triumph of civic glory, when the procession walked down the magnificent nave, on a pavement strewn with rushes, which gave forth a strong aromatic odour, as they were

trodden down and crushed by the many feet—rushes such as I have read of in old story-books, but have never seen or smelt elsewhere—and so disappeared among the glories of the inner temple faintly seen in the vista. A portion of the procession was excluded, however, from the church. The ‘Whifflers’ were considered probably as unfit to enter the abode of peace, being obviously men of the sword and of war, and my friend ‘Snap,’ as being the emblem of the Evil One, whose place was not in a religious building.

“And thus the pageant disappeared ; and now it will appear no more. *Sic transit gloria mundi*; and so have passed my boyhood’s dreams of romance. All that remains to me, you see, is the empty carcase of my old friend ‘Snap.’

“Well ! you don’t need to be so dolefully sentimental about it,” said Charley Mountain, with a mocking laugh.

“I am not quite so sure of that,” I rejoined. “My reminiscences of the Norwich civic pageant are clouded by a horribly tragic catastrophe. The occupation of ‘Whiffler,’ whom I have described as a notable adjunct to the show, had been for centuries in the possession of two families—that of the blue dresses, and that of the rose-coloured—and had descended rigorously from father to son. As a strange fatality would have it, at the very time when the Corporation Reform Bill swept away the pageant and its exponents, one family had died out entirely, and the only survivor of the other was a childless man. Whether this man was a ‘blue’ or a ‘rose colour,’ I do not know, probably not the latter, to judge by the issue. He took the loss of the functions, so proudly wielded in his family for centuries, cruelly to heart. He moped and pined, and would speak to no one. He was sexton of St. George’s Tombland Church. One morning the neighbourhood was startled and perplexed by the incessant tolling of the church bell. At last the church was entered ; and then was discovered the horrible spectacle of the sexton—the last of the Whifflers—hanging by one of the bell ropes in the belfry, and swept hither and thither by a storm of wind which shook the tower. He had not been able to bear the heavy blow, which had rendered him a useless, degraded creature in the history of his native city, and had died by his own act.”



Le Voile.

(From VICTOR HUGO.—“Les Orien tales.”)

LA SŒUR.

NAY, speak my brothers ! your keen eyes gleam
Like funeral torches ; your brows are dark ;
Pitiless, stern and fierce ye seem,
And ever your hands on your swords I mark,
Clutching the hilts. What want ye ? Say !

LE FRÈRE AÎNÉ.

Didst thou not raise thy veil to-day ?

LA SŒUR.

Brothers, when home from the bath returning,
Close by the Mosque, as my palanquin passed,
I covered my face from all glances burning,
But the soft wind swept back my veil at last.
By the Zephyrs alone was I ever seen.

LE SECOND FRÈRE.

Death ! I saw him—a Giaour—in caftan green !

LA SŒUR.

Ah, yes ! that moment. No, brothers, no !
He glanced, but he saw not. My life ye seek ?
Say, why do ye mutter in whispers low ?
Would ye kill me, a woman, defenceless, weak ?
Mercy ! why grasp ye my hands so tight ?

LE TROISIÈME FRÈRE.

Blood-red sank the sun to his setting this night.

LA SŒUR.

Mercy ! What did I ? Pardon ! grace !
Hear me, my brothers, by Heaven I swear
That never a man hath seen my face.
Allah ! four daggers ! God hear my prayer !
Death veils my sin, love, sorrow, shame

LE QUATRIÈME FRÈRE.

That veil thou never shalt raise again.

FRÈRE SAUVAGE.

Our Omnibus=Box.

A VALUED contributor has sent these interesting reminiscences :—
 “ The other evening, around the fire, we were endeavouring to shake off the influence of the December fog, which seemed to invade our very brains. Somebody hit upon the idea of asking one of us, Alfred de Mensiaux, to tell us, as he had often done before, some of his early reminiscences. He acquiesced at once, and began thus :—

(I translate, for he spoke in French, and I think this would interest your readers.)

“ Be it so, I obey. I will look back into the past, and bring you news, ay, news of those early days ; for what I am about to relate is far newer than you anticipate. Ignored of nearly all then, it is completely so now. Of four people forming the narrow circle wherein these small events took place, I am—the thought is not absolutely cheerful—the only survivor. The four characters in my story are : Alphonse Royer, the witty novelist and dramatic writer, who, by a curious coincidence, became later Director of the Opera ; Gustave Vaëz, dramatic author ; and your obedient servant. We were three inseparable friends, and in the literary world had been dubbed The Trio. The fourth character is the Piedmontese Marquis de Candia—in one word, poor Mario, whose death we learned but yesterday.

“ The scene is laid in No. 31 of the Rue St. Lazare, in the year — but I never was on friendly terms with dates. Was it in 1836 ? I would not affirm it ; let us say that these things occurred within a range of about two years, round about that date.

“ This settled, I proceed :

“ To justify our title of the inseparable Trio, we inhabited the three small apartments situated on the entresol of the said house—entresol famed at that time for the artistic, literary, scientific, mythological and cabalistic soirées we were in the habit of giving. All of which degenerated into philosophical, psychological, and, above all, eclectic séances, whenever Henri Heine appeared ; these were not the least amusing, I assure you.

“ Usually we clubbed together for breakfast ; meeting now in this one’s rooms, now in the other’s, without any fixed rule.

“ One morning—it was at Alphonse Royer’s—the morning repast was just over, when a timid ring at the bell attracted our attention. The servant appearing, announced that ‘ Un Monsieur wanted to speak to Monsieur.’

“ ‘ Who is the gentleman ?’

“ ‘ I don’t know him, sir.’

“ ‘ Ask him his name.’

“ The servant disappeared, and soon came back with a slip of paper in his hand, leaving, meanwhile, the passage door partly open. On the paper, written in pencil, was the name De Candia.

“ ‘ De Candia,’ exclaimed Alphonse. ‘ What does the fellow want with

me ; the impudence of coming here unasked ; tell him to go to—have his hair curled—bah ! Show him in, we may get some fun out of this.’

“ Here I must pause and explain.

“ At that time there existed—Place de la Bourse—a fashionable *coiffeur*, the most perfect type of his profession, type of the *époque*, talkative, full of blarney, Marseillais above all, and adorned with the melodious name of Decandia. This name became the individual like a wreath of roses on the head of a baboon.

“ Monsieur Decandia was the artiste who cultivated, as he used to say, our luxuriant locks. Thence Royer’s surprise and ours.

“ The announced Monsieur entered. Our gaze naturally turned his way ; and, to our stupefaction, in lieu of our *péruquier*, hirsute and pitted with the smallpox, we saw a pretty young man—almost too pretty for a member of the ugly sex—looking more like the page Cherubino than the soldier that he was, as we afterwards learned. He was dressed with a certain style, but *outré*—his clothes, evidently of provincial or foreign creation, were so tight as to excite the envy of a Masher, had such a *thing* existed then.

“ He bowed with ease ; a sweet smile, not untinged with anxiety—for the poor fellow must undoubtedly have heard Alphonse’s exclamations—lighted up his pretty face, decorated by a slight moustache.

“ But no sooner had he set eyes on us than his smile froze and his eyes opened wide.

“ Reason enough for that, as you will see.

“ Imagine, stretched out in three armchairs, three sturdy fellows in monks’ gowns and hoods, solemnly smoking Turkish *tchibouques*, six feet long.

“ These gowns, worn as *robe de chambres*, must not astonish you ; they were the remains of the *époque* of romanticism through which one had just passed.

“ The interchange of a few polite words brought back all our minds to quietude. Monsieur de Candia appeared delighted not to have stumbled on a conventicle of friars, and we were really so not to have to receive our *coiffeur*.

“ After handing to Royer a letter of recommendation from I forget which great Italian personage, Monsieur de Candia narrated to us his history.

“ Urged on by his own ambition and the advice of his friends, he had just thrown up his military career to try his luck on the stage as a singer—a tenor. His voice, said the letter, was charming, and its possessor had already achieved many great drawing-room triumphs.

“ ‘ One more,’ thought we, ‘ one more, who, like so many others, drop the prey for the shadow. What, in the name of wonder, does he think to do in Paris ? Does he imagine, perchance, that he will replace Rubini at the Italiens with his garrison successes ? Why does he not begin in Italy ?’

“ In short, our reception was cold ; bristling with objections ; toned down, of course, by promises. Alphonse had but little in his power, but that little he promised to do. I said, likewise, that I would speak to the Chef de Cabinet du Ministère de l’Interieur. In fact, empty promises.

“ Suddenly, Monsieur de Candia, who spoke French tolerably well, stopped short for a word. ‘ Ah ! Messieurs,’ he said, ‘ If I might speak to you in Italian.’

"As fate would have it, the young tenor had just hit upon one of Alphonse Royer's fads. The latter spoke^d Dante's tongue and was not a little proud of his accomplishment. At one leap, conversation bounded from the *andante serioso* into the *allegro*—words crossed each other with a Southern volubility. Carried away by this music into the current of talk (without fear, but not without reproach), I also aired my Italian—Italian sprinkled with English and German words—in fact, a smattering of all the languages that I murdered. And Gustave Vaëz, whether from jealousy or by *entraînement*, began to speak Flemish, the only tongue he spoke besides Bèlge—I say *spoke*, for when he wrote it was in French, and of the best.

"This soft language of Tasso having sweetened our tempers, within a quarter of an hour we were almost friends. Alphonse, in the purest Tuscan, pronounced like a Roman, declared that he would do the impossible for the Marquis Tenor of Candia.

"And now, How did it all end? Well, as usual.

"Royer bustled about, like the dear good fellow always did, to do anyone a good turn. He besieged Duponchel, the Director of the Opera, his friend, Leon Pillet, the Commissaire Royal délégué à l'Opera. He besieged Cavé, and his other friends of the Direction des Beaux Arts (in whose dependence was the Opera). He besieged I forget who; while, for my part, I was doing my best at the Ministère.

"Time elapsed. Monsieur de Candia returned to see us several times; then his visits became further apart, then ceased altogether. I met him sometimes on the boulevard, when he used to rush at me, and beg me to urge on Alphonse. His prospects, however, were looking up in another quarter. He said Parisian society was beginning to take an interest in him—and no wonder!

"He had just made the acquaintance of a financier and *une financière*, all powerful at the Opera, as are *commanditaires*, and to whom the Minister himself must have appealed, to succeed in this enterprise.

"It was at one of these meetings that I said to him, 'Had I any advice to give you, it would be to pocket the name of De Candia when you go on the stage.' I then disclosed to him the existence of his namesake the *coiffeur*.

"Far be it from me to pretend that from my advice sprung the name of Mario; but, Italian-fashion, he thanked me with such warmth that, during the ensuing two hours, I ransacked my brain to try and remember if, perchance, I had not saved his life without knowing it.

"For some days after that we exchanged bows, and soon our acquaintance died of inanition.

"Then we learned of his engagement at the Opera—an engagement that will prevent one ever inscribing the name of Mario in the martyrology of *débutants*. His *début* was not to take place before two years and a half; and during that time he was to receive 1,500 francs (£60) per month, *for his studies*. And this is the outcome of meeting on your path in life with financiers and *financières*.

"Alphonse Royer, who had been present at a hearing at the Rue Lepelletier, was unceasing in his praise of the youthfulness and freshness of

the young tenor's voice, a voice full of charm, but, perhaps, slightly pastoral.

"His *début* at the opera, in 'Robert le Diable,' was not a success, far from it, and yet never was public so well-disposed and indulgent. Not a shade of hostility in the house. It appeared as if a success was wished for; that one must have it; the fair sex especially seemed anxious for it. So much so, that, after a performance without applause, in the last act, after the hearing of a short passage, but given with that charm which was to be his glory later on, the public making an event of this little incident, rose like the swelling ocean to encore him.

"But what madness to overweight Mario with Meyerbeer's music; Mario with a voice wanting in dramatic power, and whose great charm was its adorable sweetness.

"Two years and a half of study had failed to make anything like an actor of him, and that stick of Rubini, by him, would have appeared a Frederic Lemaître.

"Strange to say, it was when Mario's voice began to fade, that he acquired the dramatic power so forcible in the latter years of his career. His loss on one side seemed to be a clear gain on the other. The one thing which struck the Trio, present at this performance, was the appearance of a beard on the face of De Candia-Mario.

"Ill-natured remark from offended people, will you say? No, honestly, we, like all, wished for a success.

"Why allude to this beard then? Simply because it holds an important place in Mario's life.

"Had he taken a vow? Had he sworn by his beard like an Osmanli? Did he wear it by order? These questions will ever remain a mystery. One thing is certain, from that date orders, advice, supplications from managers and friends, fell powerless before this manly attribute.

"One instance out of a hundred. After the non-success of 'Robert le Diable,' the management, better advised, brought out Mario in 'Le Comte Ory;' this was really his first step in his triumphant career. You may recollect that in the second act the Comte Ory penetrates into the Chateau de Formoutier disguised as a nun.

"Well, it is conventional to suppose, if it be not actual reality, that nuns have no beards.

"What was Mario going to do—to shave, or not to shave, that was the question?

"Mario was inflexible, and appeared before the astonished public with his fetich, his beard untouched, only he had so far condescended as to powder it.

"Is it not strange that my story, beginning by a hairdresser, should end by a beard."—"MARIE DE MENSIAUX."

A detestable custom has been introduced to this country, and I regret to state that it was first started at our favourite Lyceum Theatre. I allude to the rude modern fashion of flinging a heap of playbills into a basket, and telling the public to go and fish for themselves. It is bad enough for a man to be told by a lazy boy in an Eton jacket, who stands doing

nothing on a gorgeous staircase, that he may go to the wall and pick his programme, but the insult to a lady is intolerable. Again and again, when ladies have asked for programmes, I have seen these boys and superficial young gentlemen point to the basket, and literally send them to it out of their way, when it would have been the easiest thing in the world for the attendant to have courteously handed a programme to the visitor at the theatre. Bad as was the feeing system, this rough-and-ready scrambling is infinitely worse. It may be folly to say so, but I would rather pay sixpence for a programme, and be treated civilly, than have the bills thrown at my head in this boorish and bearish fashion. By all means have a relay of playbills; have them by scores and hundreds; have them in crates and washing-baskets, but the attendants should not be allowed to consider that the existence of the basket relieves them from the duty of handing a bill to a lady or a gentleman. This is what happens: A visitor comes to the theatre, and does not know the new rule. He is accompanied by ladies, and he takes his seat. "A programme, please." "Go to the basket," is the reply of the lazy attendant with his or her hands empty. Result: The unfortunate gentleman has to battle his way back over countless legs, petticoats, and sticks, to get the bill, and then to scramble to his seat again. Often and often ladies who come to the theatre alone have to submit to the same inconvenience on this new "help yourself principle," which was started at the Lyceum, and is encouraged by most of the attendants at the other theatres, who think themselves too fine and smart to do their duty. Mr. John Hollingshead was the very first manager who started the no fee system. You can get a quire of playbills at the Gaiety if you care to do so. There is a pile of them heaped up on a marble table at the entrance to the stalls, but this fact does not prevent the ever-courteous Gaiety attendants from handing a programme to each individual visitor. I am told that this "basket" or "go to the wall" or "help yourself and be hanged to you" system was borrowed from America, but I can scarcely believe that so civil a nation would permit ladies to be told by boys and youths that they were not worth attending to. At the St. James' Theatre they adopt a compromise of putting a playbill upon every seat. But it is a bad compromise. Programmes get knocked off the seats by sweeping skirts and velvet gowns—those clinging curses of the playgoer. If attendants are employed they ought not to be too grand to attend to the comforts of the visitors. At dinner parties we are not told by the footmen to go to the sideboard and pour out a glass of wine for ourselves. The wine is handed round. The playbills and books necessary for the enjoyment of the play should also be handed round, and the sooner the sponge baskets are destroyed the better. Managers are not aware of the inconvenience of the system. I present them with a hint in due season, free gratis and for nothing.

I have protested elsewhere, and I shall continue to protest again and again, against the dangerous and, as I hold, disgusting practice of cigarette-smoking, as it is now practised at our theatres—the very theatres that pride themselves on prohibiting smoke—and on that very plea deny free-trade

and fair-play to the smoking music-halls. A writer in *The People*—probably the dramatic critic of that excellent journal—pulls me up short, and says I am repeating “an old woman’s tale,” because, forsooth, no theatre has yet been burned down on account of cigarette-smoking ! Whether theatres have, or have not, been burned down through smouldering cigarettes is not to the point. They may have been, or they may not have been, so destroyed. But is the critic of *The People* prepared to say that smoking, as it is now practised at our theatres, is *not* a dangerous and disgusting habit ? Is he serious in asserting that there is no danger in flinging away half-smoked and smouldering cigarettes on the mats, carpeting, draperies, and druggets at the entrance-halls of our theatres, over which ladies’ dresses are constantly passing and repassing ; is he bold enough to assert that it is courteous or decent to stand blocking-up the approaches to theatres and puffing tobacco-smoke into the faces of women ? If so, he differs very much from my views of what is decent and gentlemanly, and I am delighted that we are in perfect disagreement. I don’t want to wait until a theatre is burned down through reckless smoking, as the critic of *The People* evidently does. I want to prevent so hideous a disaster, and so ought every critic, citizen, and sane man. What I say is, and I shall never be tired of saying it, (*a*) that all theatres and places of amusement ought, in the interests of the public, to be inspected, and that if the Lord Chamberlain has no inspectors or funds to provide them with, that the Government should see that they are both provided without loss of time ; (*b*) I say most emphatically that the amusement laws, applicable to this mighty London and to the country at large, require a wholesale and wholesome revision, as unanimously recommended by a House of Commons Committee in the year 1866. If these laws were bad and cruel then, they are worse and less defensible now. Archdeacon Farrar has had the pluck to say that wholesome and pure recreation is the greatest and noblest power for evangelizing and humanizing the masses ; and I am prepared to show, and defy contradiction, that wholesome and pure recreation for the masses is impossible so long as the amusement laws remain as they are now—cruel, illiberal, unenlightened, and unjust.

Concerning my remarks on the subject of drinking and smoking in theatres I find also that the clever and admirable little paper, *The Stage*, has entirely misunderstood the drift of my argument. I have no earthly objection to drinking or smoking in theatres if it is the wish and desire of my countrymen to do so. I am all for liberty, free trade, and fair play. I don’t desire to deny to others the pleasures in which I myself indulge, but what I do object to is the humbug and inconsistency of the theatrical trade as opposed to the music-hall trade. For years and years past the music-halls have been endeavouring to improve their entertainments, to rise above the hopeless vulgarity and dreary inanity of the music-hall programme, to play scenes that have some sense in them, to introduce dramatic action, to encourage art, and to depose the suggestive comic singer. But the law and the theatres have prevented their meritorious efforts. Theatrical managers, like so many dogs in the manger, threatened them with the penalties of a rotten old Act of Parliament, passed in the early Georgian era, long before music-halls were born or thought of, for

daring to perform a play in a place where smoking and drinking are permitted. Now I maintain that, according to present custom, there is almost as much—I might say, quite as much—smoking and drinking in a theatre as in a music-hall. I must say also that the line to be drawn between them *quâ* refreshments is infinitesimal, and that it is a monstrous hardship and injustice for managers who profess to discourage smoking and drinking at their theatres—but don't do anything of the kind—to prosecute and harass music-hall managers who are just as desirous to give a good entertainment as they are. What I clamour for are free trade, fair play, and the absence of humbug. I think myself that smoking might well be allowed at a theatre like the Alhambra, or one devoted to ballet and spectacular pieces, but at the same time if all managers were foolish enough to turn their theatres into smoking-rooms they would of course lose their patronage, and cease to be first-class places of entertainment. Surely it is arrogant and inconsistent in the extreme for the theatrical manager to accept a license from the Lord Chamberlain on the condition that this is a place distinct from a music-hall in the matter of refreshment, and to compel the music-hall manager to give a silly entertainment of trash under a magistrate's license and why—because he allows smoking and drinking. Let the writer in *The Stage*—who says he has just as much experience as I have—obtain the Report of the Committee of the House of Commons of 1866, and then he will understand the question. At present he is unfamiliar with the gross absurdities of theatrical law.

Even Mr. Pinero imagines, as no doubt many actors imagine, that "Ash Wednesday is a theatrical holiday by Act of Parliament." It is nothing of the kind. Theatres are closed on Ash Wednesday simply because the Lord Chamberlain won't grant a license to any manager except he personally undertakes not to open his theatre on Ash Wednesday. He used to undertake not to open in Passion Week. That was struck out of the conditions for a license, and the Lord Chamberlain might strike out Ash Wednesday from his condition to-morrow if he cared to do so. It is a Lord Chamberlain's rule that prevents the actors from earning their bread on an ordinary working-day that has no religious significance in this country, and not made by any Act of Parliament at all.

Miss Minnie Palmer has done what few actresses ever dream of doing. She has had the good sense, the tact and the discretion—like a certain Goody in the old song—"to moderate the rancour" of her style. Poor little lady, it was not her fault. She was educated and brought up in an atmosphere that was clearly antagonistic to her artistic impulse. I don't suppose she wanted to be untrue to her art, but she grimaced and attitudinized in excess simply because she thought that the audiences she found in America were exactly the audiences she would find all over England. She deemed she could do no wrong if she screwed up her talent to over concert pitch. As ill luck would have it, Miss Minnie Palmer started her English career in the country and not in London. Provincial audiences would probably applaud, or at any rate they would leave unrebuked, the very errors that are justly considered unpardonable in London. So Miss Palmer played in the English provinces just as she had been taught to play



"Let's banish business, banish sorrow ;
To the gods belong to-morrow,"

COWLEY.

Minnie Palmer

in America, with evident talent, but without the seasoning of discretion and good taste. By the merest accident in the world I happened to see Miss Minnie Palmer for the first time in the autumn of last year at Southport in Lancashire. I did not hesitate to say what I thought of her performance. My words stand recorded in the back pages of this magazine. I knew she would have to fight a serious battle with the critics of London if she intended to act as she acted then, without thought or consideration of her art, and if she were led by the nose by provincial applause. It is the misfortune of all artists that they lose this checking power when they stray away from London. Only recently we had to remonstrate forcibly with Mr. Kendal for his acting of a popular character in "Impulse." He left us a comedian; he came back a droll. I have seldom known a good artist who went far away from us without coming back a different being. Patti, Nillson, Charles Mathews, Adelaide Neilson, Ada Cavendish—all returned with an added exaggeration that can only be accounted for by playing before audiences seemingly indifferent of the nice points of art, or in theatres where these nice points are not appreciated. When Miss Minnie Palmer came to the Grand Theatre at Islington, she encountered the hostility of many critics, but the approbation of the public. The critics saw her cleverness but regretted her excess; the public accepted her merit, never caring one brass farthing whether her defects jeopardized her future. Luckily the actress was sharp enough to correct the bad without injuring the good, and she now appears in the Strand just as I should have liked to see her when she pleasantly disappointed me at Southport. All those who are supremely ignorant of what criticism in some cases tries to do, will say that Miss Minnie Palmer was right all through, and the critics were all wrong. Such supreme egotists as these, as pretentious as they are ignorant, maintain that a man who conscientiously differs from his fellows in judging a work of art—or supposed art—is *ipso facto* a fool. Why on earth criticism should be unanimous I am at a loss to conceive. That it should be wrong because it is not unanimous always struck me as the sublimity of folly. "Sir, what idiots these critics are," says Mr. Pennyflower, "they don't agree and tell me whether the woman is good or bad. If they all agreed I should be able to bet on a certainty. As it is, I must judge for myself." What a bore! Over and over again authors and managers paste a string of unharmonious criticisms side by side to try and prove the absurdity of criticism. It was done only recently at the Globe, and the only people that were laughed at were the authors of the placards. I admire a man, when he praises or abuses a thing, to give his reason for so doing. If he does this it is immaterial whether he is in the majority or the minority. He is an honest man. Personally, I would rather people agreed with than disagreed with me, but I would rather be in the minority of thoughtful men than in the majority of timid sheep who have only one way to go—the way they are led over a hedge. The critics are not fools who once found Miss Minnie Palmer unpardonably overstrung, but now carefully moderated, and can praise her power of self-inspection; but the writers are lamentably ignorant who condemn a critic of tergiversation, who sees a clever little lady, under no discipline, at Southport, and the same clever little lady reined up and in harness at the Strand. There is more talent in the

world than that of Miss Minnie Palmer turned in the wrong direction by injudicious flattery and insincere compliment.

Miss Minnie Palmer, whose photograph appears in this number, was born at Philadelphia, U.S.A., on March 31, 1865. She remained for some little time at the convent of the Sacred Heart, Manhattanville, New York, whence she was taken, when eight years of age, to Vienna. There she was taught music and German, and, coming to Paris, she learned French and the art of dancing. After a stay of three years on the Continent, she went with her parents to Baltimore, in which city she made her first appearance on the stage in September, 1876, when only eleven years of age, in a juvenile part in a play called "Kisses." But the exertion of acting proved too severe a strain on the strength of the child actress, who came again to Europe for recreation, to be speedily summoned back to America in order to act Dorothy in Mr. Lawrence Barrett's production of "Dan'l Druce," at Booth's Theatre, New York. During the next season Miss Palmer acted, amongst other parts, Minnie Symperson, in "Engaged," Dot, in "The Cricket on the Hearth," and Belle, in a piece entitled "Risks." She also made a great success as Louise in the "Two Orphans." In the season of 1879-80, a two-act comedy, "The Boarding School, by Mr. E. Browne, in which Miss Palmer had made a hit, gave place to "My Sweetheart." In this piece she has appeared with considerable success in England and America. Miss Minnie Palmer made her first appearance on the British stage at the Princess's Theatre, Glasgow, on June 4, 1883; she acted for the first time in London at the Grand Theatre, Islington, on September 17 following.

One of the strangest misprints that ever occurred in a daily paper might have been seen the other day in connection with the reappearance of Miss Minnie Palmer at the Strand Theatre. The writer, who had alluded to this clever little lady as "this queer composition of song, dance, and high animal spirits," was made to talk of Miss Palmer as "this queen composed of song, dance, and high animal spirits"—a very strange queen indeed. Of course, the dreadfully funny and excruciatingly clever writers darted down upon the obvious error with beak and talon set with savagery.

On the occasion of Miss Minnie Palmer's return to London at the Strand Theatre each member of the audience was presented with an admirable portrait of the little actress, taken by Mr. Samuel Walker, of Regent Street. By the way, I have to thank Mr. Walker for the picture of Miss Minnie Palmer that adorns our frontispiece this month. It is one of the prettiest and most artistic that has yet appeared.

The farcical comedy, "Our Regiment," first brought out at the Vaudeville Theatre, on Tuesday afternoon, February 13, last year, and since acted with success in the country, was placed on the stage of the Globe Theatre, on January 21. In a letter to a contemporary, Mr. H. Hamilton complains about one of his critics who spoke of "Our Regiment"

as being an "adaptation from the German." Mr. Hamilton states that had his critic done him "the justice to verify his facts before he lent the impetus of his pen and the weight of his position to mis-statements," he would have found that "the play was originally announced as 'founded on the German.'" This is a veritable storm in a teacup. Putting aside the question of adaptation and originality which Mr. Hamilton wishes to argue, it may be as well to remind the letter-writer that had he taken the trouble to verify his own facts before lending himself to impetuous epistles, he would have discovered that the programme of the original production of "Our Regiment" simply announced the play as "a new farcical comedy, by H. Hamilton, author of 'Moths,' 'A Shadow Sceptre,' &c.," not one word being said about the original. The bill of the Globe Theatre made a similar statement. It may be hinted to Mr. Hamilton that when the critic wrote of his "adaptation from the German," he might with justice have added something about plagiarism. To announce a play which owes its origin to a foreign source without due acknowledgement is tantamount to claiming its authorship. Mr. H. Hamilton cannot claim to be the author of "Our Regiment," for we should never have seen it had there being no such work in existence as "Krieg im Frieden."

The pantomimes this year at both the West-end houses were far better than they have been for a considerable time. They were less vulgar, less dependent on the worn-out jokes of the music-halls, and in parts very funny. I have seen nothing better for many a long year than the Cinderella of Miss Kate Vaughan, a charming personation, graceful, ideal, *spirituelle*, and delightful to contemplate. She is far more than a dancer, in which art she has no rival. Her Cinderella is full of imagination, and her art, delicate and sensitive as it is, contrasts pleasantly with the rough and tumble fun which always must be the standing dish of pantomime. Comedy in a very welcome form came from Mr. Harry Nicholls and Mr. Herbert Campbell, whose song, "I beg your pardon," and whose nagging duet of words, as Cinderella's envious sisters, will long be remembered to the credit of these very funny gentlemen. The Mario Sisters were also very popular with all the holiday audiences, and Miss Dot Mario, at a short notice, took the part of Cinderella with considerable success during Miss Vaughan's unfortunate absence owing to an accident. Pantomime will not die so long as Mr. Augustus Harris gives so good an entertainment as this—a bright, lively and sparkling entertainment. Mr. Harry Payne, the best clown now living, is of course "retained on the establishment," and that he will remain there for many years to come will be the sincere wish of children of all ages, old friends and new.

The Vokes Family, assisted by Mr. Powers, an American pantomimist of the first-class, had it all their own way at Her Majesty's, and they all appear to defy time. The pantomime in which they appeared, on the subject of "Little Red Riding Hood," was quite above the average of such pantomimes, and owed much of its spirit to the musical guidance of Mr.

W. C. Levey, who has conducted more pantomimes than any man living. The chorus singing of the children was particularly admired, and the "Fat Boys' Chorus," as well as the warbling of the little Kate Green-away girls, became the talk of the town. The ballet, too, was far more attractive than usual, owing to the clever and admirable dancing of Mdlle. Sampietro. On the whole the pantomime was so pretty and popular, that we may safely look to Mr. Leader to give us one of these shows every year in a theatre admirably adapted for the purpose. He kept his promise, and gave us a good old-fashioned pantomime with plenty of fun and no vulgarity in it.

It will doubtless appear a somewhat bold thing to affirm that the works even of our greatest artists, whether of modern or bygone date, can be neither as honestly criticized or admired when exhibited by themselves in one vast collection, as if they were intermingled with others possessing an equal claim on our attention, though differing alike in idea as in sentiment. Yet such is the thought which imperceptibly forces itself upon the minds of those who devote their time to the study of the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, now being exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery, New Bond Street.

There are two things which in the present collection can scarcely fail to attract even the most unobservant eye. One is, the marvellous richness and depth of colour which rivets our gaze, on whichever side we turn; the other, the extraordinary versatility of style displayed, in so many instances, to such a remarkable degree, that we are often inclined to question the veracity of the statement that these works are the production of one great mind and genius. As we linger over such varied examples of thought and feeling, the wish involuntarily arises that each composition could have a separate place of its own, some special nook, in order that its individual beauties might be sufficiently appreciated. This, it is needless to add, can scarcely be the case where, as in the present instance, the framework of one picture touches that of another. Such a close contiguity must inevitably injure even the most opposite and diverse styles of which true art is capable.

But nevertheless, viewed *en masse*, there are many works in this exhibition which leave upon the mind impressions of the most artistic delight and pleasure. Take, for example, the well-known picture of "Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse." Is it not almost impossible to believe that the same hand which could so exquisitely reveal the immense depth of thought observable in this woman's face, as she sits, clad in those brown draperies, which contrast so harmoniously with the richer tone of her hair, could as faithfully portray, in the portrait of "The Duchess of Devonshire and Child," the living existence of the joy and fun which irradiate the features of this baby-girl resting in such blissful happiness on her mother's knee? Every line of the picture speaks of animation and vivacity; the spirit of domestic contentment being caught with as rare a power of genius as in the case of Mrs. Siddons, where we can *feel*, as it were, the absolute and complete repose in which the calm dignity of the woman seems to consist.

It would be an impossible task to severally enumerate the admirable

portraits of which this collection is so full. Foremost amongst those most worthy our attention are the two pictures of "Members of the Dilettanti Society," these being especially noticeable for a marvellous grace of posture and variety of facial expression, which is displayed in a more studied, though as equally effective a manner, in the life-size portraits of the "Ladies Waldegrave." Of the single portraits, the one of Mrs. Abington as "Miss Prue" claims the highest approbation, which may as unreservedly be bestowed on that of "Mr. Tomkins." To our thinking, the latter picture is the most life-like portrayal of a remarkably handsome face which this exhibition contains.

Turning to those illustrative of child life, we are confronted by a series of gems, severally worthy of being closely criticized and admired. No. 75 is a delightful study of a trim-looking little maid, whose plain white frock contrasts beautifully with the deep reddish brown of her hair. The small picture entitled "Guardian Angels," may be best described as an exquisite study of childlike expressions. How blissfully unconscious is this sleeping baby, of the half-demure half-frightened gaze of her little protectress, whose innocent mind appears to be somewhat startled by the affectionate embrace of another child, who throws her arms around the two as she bends towards the elder girl with a pleading wistful look on the half-parted lips, which is as full of poetical feeling as it is true to Nature. "The Studious Boy" and "The Schoolboy," as examples of the marvellous richness of colouring which so eminently characterizes the works of Sir Joshua Reynolds, may be singled out for especial admiration, but as we have before had occasion to remark, their intrinsic merits cannot be fully recognized whilst they are so closely surrounded by counter attractions.

But before bidding farewell to an exhibition of art which must long be associated in our minds with many a pleasant recollection, let us turn towards a picture which, to a greater or less degree, must rivet the attention of even the most casual observer. And yet this "Study," as it is called, possesses no diversity or brightness of colour to attract the eye. It might very rightly be described as "a harmony in brown."

The figure, we are told, was one of Sir Joshua's well-known models referred to in his letters as "the girl with red hair." The background is composed of varied shades and gradations of brown, against which the regular yet graceful folds of the girl's white draperies stand out in bold relief. Her rich auburn hair, looking a dullish red when compared with the lighter tone of the background, clusters round a sweet upturned face, seen only in profile. The softly rounded arms are stretched out in front of her, whilst nestling in the close grasp of the slender fingers is the fluttering form of a small white dove. The weird poetical beauty which envelops the whole subject must be seen to be rightly appreciated, for words have their limits. They may describe, but cannot adequately express the depth of thought and imagination so exquisitely portrayed in this "Study."

If these are rightly understood, the picture of "the girl with red hair," will long linger in our minds as one of the most ideal works of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Last month, when reviewing Mr. Austin Brereton's "Biography of Henry Irving," I threw out a hint that has happily led to some good results. I pointed out, as so many others have done from time to time, what an unfortunate gap there is in our dramatic history, from 1830, when the records of Geneste end, down to the present time, and I lamented that Mr. F. L. Blanchard has never been induced to bridge over this important interval and to give us an invaluable book. Mr. Wilson Barrett, ever active and distinguished for his good works, has personally interested himself in the matter, and the result is that my friend Mr. E. L. Blanchard, will at once commence his long-projected work entitled, "Fifty Years of the English Stage," that is to say, from 1831, when Geneste finishes, down to 1881. It will be a treasure-house of knowledge, fact, and anecdote, and there is no man living who could do it so well as the Nestor of dramatic critics, whose memory is as keen and vivid as ever it was. The book will be brought out by public subscription, and further particulars concerning it will be eventually announced.

This reminds me that our old friend the "Era Almanack" has made its annual appearance, a record of the stage and its doings, carefully and accurately compiled and edited by Mr. Edward Ledger. For the last sixteen years the "Era Almanack" has been the complete index to the stage, and with its aid, and a file of theatrical newspapers, we have been able to get along pretty well. It was in the "Era Almanack" that Mr. E. L. Blanchard printed those wonderful histories of the various London theatres, which are in themselves dramatic chronicles of great value. The series has been discontinued too long, and I was in hope that we should have had another history in the Almanack of 1884. But they will all, doubtless, appear in Blanchard's "History of the Stage." The Almanack of 1884, where stern fact can spare the space, is occupied by fiction by popular writers, anecdotes scattered in odd corners, and pictures—very quaint pictures—by various members of the dramatic profession.

It is sad to put up on the bookshelves the last book of collected essays by Dutton Cook. It is called "On the Stage" (Sampson Low, Marston & Co., Fleet Street), and is intended as a companion or supplement to "A Book of the Play." Several of the papers it contains were first printed in *THE THEATRE*. Capitally got up in two neat volumes, and adorned with an excellent likeness of our old friend, "On the Stage" is sent on its mission with the following note to the author's preface: "Owing to the sudden and lamented death of Mr. Dutton Cook, the labour of seeing the contents of these two volumes through the press has devolved upon a friend. Fortunately, however, Mr. Cook had carefully revised all the chapters for the printer, and the editor's functions have, therefore, been almost exclusively confined to seeing that the text is printed in conformity with the author's revision.—M. T." M. T., of course, stands for Moy Thomas, the most intimate friend of Dutton Cook. I can cordially recommend this very interesting and accurate book.

The next production at the Alhambra will probably be the "Poor Scholar," a version of the famous "Bettelstudent," by Mr. Beatty-Kingston. It was originally intended for the Carl Rosa Company, but Mr. Carl Rosa has disposed of his valuable property to the Alhambra directorate. The opera, which has obtained an enormous popularity in America, thus starts with every chance of a brilliant success, and I am informed that the book will contain some of the best written and most musical lyrics that modern opera has seen. Mr. Kingston has every possible qualification for the work. He is a charming verse writer, as our readers know, and he is a musician of scholarly attainment and rare executive power. He is just the man to write for music, and to play it when it is written.

From an Ipswich correspondent I learn that Miss Alleyn and her company held possession of the boards of the Theatre Royal, Ipswich, from Boxing-night until January 19, and notwithstanding the somewhat apathetic interest felt in the drama there, were well received. The Shakesperian characters played by Miss Alleyn were Juliet and Rosalind, and the Shylock of Mr. Jones Finch was pronounced a satisfactory performance. Amongst other popular impersonations by the leading lady were Marguerite Gauthier in her own adaptation of "La Dame aux Camélias," Lady Teazle, and Adrienne Lecouvreur. "Much Ado About Nothing" was played for two nights during the engagement, but "Measure for Measure," which had been expected, was not produced, although it had been in active rehearsal. I hear Mr. Mervyn Dallas is about to join the company, and that Mr. Felix Pitt has been engaged for leading parts for next tour. Mr. Charles Bernard, the director of the company, evidently means to go on strengthening its *personnel*.

Signor Monari-Rocca, the well-known vocalist, gave his "First Cosmopolitan Ballad and Instrumental Concert," at Steinway Hall, on January 11, and if the rest of the series are as good as the first his enterprise deserves a complete success. Signor Monari-Rocca was himself in excellent voice, his phrasing in the Star song from "Tanhäuser," showed great artistic feeling. He was encored in the French ballad, "Ma Barque," and one of the most successful numbers of the evening was undoubtedly his duet with Madame Mattei, from "l'Elisire." This lady invariably gives pleasure by her finished singing; her solo was selected from "Anna Bolena." This reminds me that Madame Mattei (Mdlle. Colombo) was the Jane Seymour, when Tietjens revived this opera and took the title rôle, Madame Trebelli being the Page. Madame Mattei, on being recalled, gave "Una Voce," from "Il Barbière," with much brilliancy. Madame Thea Sanderini is gifted with a very sweet voice, but the aria from "Robert le Diable" is too dramatic to suit her style; in the song from the "Nozze di Figaro," she was very charming. Miss Inez Basanta sang a new song by L. Caracciolo, and was to have been accompanied by the composer; unfortunately he did not appear. Mdlle. Le Brun also sang a new song by Signor Carlo Ducci, who accompanied her. This gentleman and Miss Arthur were the pianists of the evening; the young lady is very promising. By some unaccountable negligence, the lady harpist's name was omitted in the programme, but I

cannot omit the word of praise her two solos so well deserve. Madame Gordoni was likewise accompanied by the composer of the pieces she selected, T. Caryll. Mr. Walter Fletcher was in good voice, and seemed to hit the taste of the audience with "The Owl." Signor De Monaco gave Handel's "Rendi il sereno" with much taste. But all did good service. Miss Tiny White recited "The Women of Mumbles Head," and "The Curfew shall not Ring To-night." Last, but not least, the conductor was that sound and excellent musician, Signor G. Li-Calsi, who also took part in a duet with Miss Arthur.

The Whittington Dramatic Society invited their friends to St. George's Hall on January 17. The house was crowded to overflowing, and many of the best London amateurs were present, forming a most appreciative audience. The first piece "Ethel's Test," by H. M. Williamson, is a clever and bright little play, but would gain more pith by compression into one act. This piece is not perhaps so much too long, but certainly the curtain comes down in the middle of it without any apparent *raison d'être*. The ladies, Miss Effie Liston, Miss Pattie Bell, and Miss Say Morton, were one and all very good. The gentlemen were not quite sure of their parts, and, once or twice, waited painfully for the prompter. Mr. E. T. Sachs was very feeble, Mr. Walter Bramall a fair Arthur Durant; Mr. George Martin deserves special notice, his Captain Hatherley was capital, full of "go" and fun, and it was rather hard on him to be hampered in some of his scenes by the want of memory of others. "His Own Guest," an original comedy in three acts, by A. R. Ayers and Paul Blake, in which Mr. Arthur Ayers himself took a prominent part, was interpreted to perfection. The plot of "His own Guest" is slight and not very new. The son of a baronet, turned out of his father's house on suspicion of a forgery committed by one of his friends. This son, too proud to prove his innocence and betray the culprit, going abroad under an assumed name, becoming a rich man, and returning years after to find his father, who had married again, dead, and his half-brother in possession of the title, by right his own. The scheming woman, but loving mother, who stoops to crime for the sake of her boy. The heiress, who loves the outcast, all the more for the cloud hanging over him, the two cousins who are fond, when it is not wise to be so, and the old family servant who has forgotten everything but dear Master Francis, are all familiar to us; but if all these characters are old friends, the authors have imparted to them fresh youth and power to enrol our sympathy. Some of the scenes are exceedingly good, the dialogue is bright and fresh, pathetic and witty in turn, and the characters are consistent. Edith Pennington is a bewitching girl, full of mischief and piquant raillerie, but transparent enough to show her true womanly heart underneath. Miss Nellie Bromley looked and acted the part admirably; like many others, this lady, who began her career in burlesque, has made rapid strides in her profession, and is now an accomplished *comédienne*. Miss Pattie Bell was a good Lady Meredith, but was not made-up to look old enough. Miss Effie Liston looked pretty and interesting as May Ray, but she is rather cold, and, though *acting* very well, fails to move her audience in the pathetic

scenes. She showed to better advantage when she could look cheerful. Mr. George Martin was a good Pennington, and Mr. Walter Barnard very amusing as Colonel Skooter. Sir Charles Meredith was undertaken by the young author, Mr. Arthur Ayers, and (not always the case with authors) he selected the very part to suit him. He was simple and natural, and overcame the difficulty of his scene with May Ray, when the broken-hearted Sir Charles goes off with a sob, by the true earnestness of his acting. Mr. A. George Hockley, as the banished son, gave a perfect and artistic delineation of the hero. His make-up was excellent; as for his acting, we can only say that Mr. Hockley can rank with some of the best professionals of the day. A word of especial praise is due to Mr. Ellis Pride, as the old family servant; indeed, we have not seen anything so good of the kind since seeing Reigner in "*La joie fait-peur*."

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. The other night I was bound as usual for the theatre, and was particularly anxious to know the exact situation of my stall. A few minutes before Mr. Martin Cobbett had sent me his new and useful "*Box Office and Entertainment Guide*." I turned to this capital compilation, that gives a sketch plan of the interior of every theatre in London, and found my seat at once. Happily it was an outside one. What a blessing in these days to get an outside seat when the stalls are packed so closely together that it is a misery to get to them or to return again.

Mr. Julian Cuningham, M.A., gave a recital of "*Macbeth*," January 14, at St. James's Hall. Mr. Cuningham was over-weighted. He is intensely in earnest; but in spite of his evidently putting his heart and soul into his work, he misses the lights and shades, and his delivery is monotonous. It is not that Mr. Cuningham does not use different tones of voice; but after the first act, one knows beforehand just where he will raise his voice and where he will lower it. His reading of *Lady Macbeth* was a mistake. In his anxiety to give the speeches in a soft feminine voice, he did away with the emphasis—all the energy and nervous resolution of the ambitious woman disappeared, so that her wailing in the sleeping scene was given in the same tone. Mr. Cuningham was at his best in the scene where *Macbeth* sends the murderers after Banquo. This showed some true dramatic power, and the third scene, act v., was also good. Unfortunately, he showed evident signs of fatigue. Mr. Cuningham, besides his earnestness, has the quality of not being stagey. Whether his impulse be right or not, at any rate it is natural; and it must be said, in all fairness, that he struggled with a most unsympathetic audience, and deserved more encouragement than he reaped.

St. George's Hall was crowded by a brilliant assembly on the 15th of January; the fair sex seemed to vie with each other in matter of dress, and there was a good sprinkling of Indian princes, turbans, and jewels. Four good-looking young ladies, attired in becoming and picturesque costumes, semi-Spanish, semi-Oriental, distributed the programmes, in

return for which you were at liberty to be as generous as you pleased, for the occasion was one of charity—an amateur dramatic performance in aid of the Home for Unemployed and Daily Governesses, given under high patronage. Mr. Hermann Vezin was present, and I also noticed clever Miss Rosa Kenney in the audience. The opening farce, “Two to One,” was briskly acted by Mr. Blake, Miss Mary Brown, and Miss Millett. Then followed “The Palace of Truth,” that witty comedy by W. S. Gilbert. First of all, my congratulations to Mr. Robert Markby for the excellent stage management. The character of Princess Zéolide, that charming creation of Mrs. Kendal’s, was on this occasion undertaken by the Princess Hellen Randhir Singh. This lady is very young and very pretty, she has a sympathetic voice, and lovely expressive eyes; she was nervous, especially at first, and perhaps a trifle over anxious to be letter-perfect; but her reading of Zéolide was very sweet and maidenly; there was a touching charm in her very timidity which suited the rôle exceedingly well. In the second act the Princess Hellen was encored in her song; her voice is pure and touching, and she sings with much taste. Mrs. Lennox Browne was an excellent Queen Altemire, Miss Emily Sheridan an admirable Mirza; she looked very handsome, and her elocution is remarkably good. Miss Mary Brown was good as Azéma, and Miss Laura Graves took the part of Palmis. Why does Mr. Claude Penley ever undertake the parts of heavy fathers which suit him so badly when he can be so very good in a different line? His King Phanor was a perfect work of art of its kind; he never missed a point, his play of feature was extremely funny; but, though intensely comical, he was never vulgar. Mr. A. George Hockley, as Prince Philamir, was made up to look as near a facsimile of Mr. Kendal as he could manage. He acted well and earnestly. Mr. Nowell Sherson and Mr. S. B. Sheridan were fair representatives of Zoram and Chrysal. Aristæus fell to the lot of Mr. Arthur Young, and Mr. George M. Allen gave some prominence to the small part of Gélanor.

Mr. Charles Du Val, the author of “With a Show through Southern Africa,” is giving his entertainment of “Odds and Ends,” at St. James’s Hall, to crowded audiences. By-the-way, it is curious to note the peculiar class of audience which assembles to witness these inoffensive performances. Not playgoers, evidently, or but a spare sprinkling of them. They are, no doubt, the good people who appease their longing for the wicked theatres by this half-way house to the drama.

If one could look upon Mr. Charles Du Val as a mere showman, “Odds and Ends” might be pronounced to be very good of its kind, but Mr. Du Val is eminently capable of better things. He has an intelligent, expressive face, a good voice, and a clear enunciation, which is always distinct even in its most rapid delivery. This is admirably shown in his vivid description of a steeplechase as Captain Rattlecash. This we consider the best thing in the programme, and well worth hearing. As Betsy Scrubbe, the drudge, he is also very funny and humorous. His rapid changes are, of course, clever; but this is not true art, and Mr. Du Val is seen at his best when he uses no accessories. For instance, in the

Picture Gallery, his quiet reading of the criticisms is the only good point of a very poor thing; and his Scientific Lecture is, to our mind, quite spoiled by the illustrations. Mr. Du Val's get up as Professor Dullbore and his play of feature were capital. Had the lecture been only a speech, *not* illustrated, it would have been very good. These constant changes of wig and costumes brought forcibly to our memory these words of the late Charles Dickens, after describing a show:—" *The most remarkable feature in the whole of his ingenious performance is, that whatever he does to disguise himself has the effect of rendering him rather more like himself than he was at first.*" In conclusion, we consider Mr. Charles Du Val a good actor and elocutionist, but the substance of his entertainment is not of the high class that his ability would warrant.

The revival of "The New Magdalen" has, thanks to the able impersonation of Miss Ada Cavendish, proved a great success at the Novelty Theatre. Miss Cavendish acts with all her old power and dramatic intensity her original part of Mercy Merrick; and she is ably supported by Mr. Frank Archer, who is again the representative of Julian Grey; by Mr. Mark J. Quinton, who is an earnest Horace Holmcroft; and by Miss Le Thièrè, who is a gentle Lady Janet.

Tuesday, January 22, saw the birth of a new Dramatic and Musical Society—"The Busy Bees." This Society has for President Mr. Hermann Vezin, that prince of elocutionists, and for committee: Mrs. Lennox Browne, Mrs. Walter Symonds, Mr. George Hockley, Mr. Nowell Sherson, and Mr. Edmond Power. Their object is charity, but this is what they say for themselves:—"Looking to the large number of the dramatic profession who have served their apprenticeship as amateurs, no apology is needed for founding another Society, especially as the object of the 'Busy Bees' is to remove one of the few, but not the least potent, of objections to amateur performances in aid of charities. It is a fixed rule with this Society that, whenever a performance is given in town for the benefit of any particular charity, the expenses shall be defrayed from the funds of the club, so that the *entire proceeds* of such performance shall be handed over intact to the treasurer of the institution to be benefited. With country performances the expenses will be kept as low as possible." After "God Save the Queen," played by members of the band of the 2nd Life Guards, who gave their services during the evening by kind permission of Colonel J. S. Ferguson, "The Busy Bees," for their inaugural swarm, first showed us "His Last Legs," and then brought "Grist to the Mill," and in the middle of the evening their charming Queen Bee and hon. secretary and treasurer, Mrs. Lennox Browne, read an address specially written for the occasion by Mr. Wallis Mackay. "His Last Legs," one of those plays which would make a capital farce if condensed into one act, was well acted, especially by Mr. Blake as O'Callaghan, but we were surprised to find in a performance so free from exaggeration, the act of questionable taste of putting his ragged and dirty handkerchief on the head of the young people when pretending to bless them. Mr. Harold Boulton was a vivacious Charles Rivers,

and Master Wood said his few lines very well indeed. Colonel Hervey, Mr. J. G. La Serre, and Miss Behnke did good service in their respective characters, Miss Mary Brown slightly overacted her part, and Miss Maud Millet was sweet and natural as usual. As for Mr. S. Brinsley Sheridan, he simply did not know his part at all.

"Grist to the Mill" provided Mrs. Lennox Browne with a charming rôle, and she acted it delightfully; apart from her talent, this lady is happy in the possession of a very sweet voice. Mrs. Walter Symonds gave much point to the old maid. Mr. Claude Penley's conception of the Vidame is very good, but it was too evident that he was acting; for some reason unknown, his thoughts were evidently elsewhere, a fault which contrasted strongly with the intense earnestness of Mr. J. G. Meade, who looked exceedingly well in his uniform. Mr. Nowell Sherson's make-up and acting as the old Marquis deserve praise, and the Prince de Conti of Mr. Tugwell was also good; it is a pity his enunciation is not more clear. By-the-by, is not Mr. Claude Penley aware that it is not usual when speaking to a royal personage to be constantly crossing before him, and to turn one's back upon him.

The choice of the company bids fair for the future of the Society; but it is a great pity that this inaugural performance was not put off for another week. One or two more rehearsals would have made all the difference, for the *reading* of each character was decidedly good, but the players were far from knowing their parts, there were some awkward waits, and the whole thing dragged, and the prompter, whoever he is, ought to remember it should not be necessary for the performers to have to attract his attention when they require his help. But we repeat, as we have no doubt to the success of "The Busy Bees," they have in themselves all the requirements for a good performance, and a little more work would have made everything go smoothly on this occasion.



Love's Litany.

HAD I but known long years ago
 The deep unrest, the weight of woe,
 The pain of having loved you so!
 Had I but seen through mist of years
 My bitter sacrifice of tears—
 Had I but felt as I do now,
 These scars of sorrow on my brow,
 No seeds of promise had I sown,
 My life were not so weary grown,
Had I but known!

Had we but known—that summer day
 We wandered forth, the primrose-way,
 Our love would wither and decay!
 Had we but felt one hour like this,
 A barren time without one kiss—
 Had we but seen that we could stand
 Parted for ever in love's land,
 We had not suffered—to atone
 We had not sighed, apart—alone!

Had we but known!

C. S.

THE THEATRE.



Diderot's "Paradox of Acting." *

BY WILLIAM ARCHER.

THE dialogue, as a form of exposition, has this disadvantage, that it stimulates the pugnacious, or, more politely speaking, the chivalrous instinct in human nature. One of the disputants invariably goes as a lamb to the slaughter, and his pre-arranged overthrow cannot but stir our sympathy. Thus a feeling of antagonism to the writer's argument is aroused by the very form. There is a cat-and-mouse cruelty about the Socratic method against which our sense of justice, nay, of humanity, rebels.

One of the paradoxes of Diderot's "Paradoxe" is that it may be said almost literally of the second speaker that as a sheep before the shearers he is dumb. He now and then bleats forth a semi-articulate objection ; but he evidently knows that he is there to be shorn, and is anxious to get the operation over as soon as possible. Acting upon Grimm's aphorism, "*Ne vous expliquez point si vous voulez vous entendre,*" he never thinks of demanding that unpleasant preliminary to all fruitful debate, a definition of terms. We cannot, indeed, regret this, as a definition of terms would probably have ended the discussion, and we should have lost an entertaining and suggestive essay. At the same time we close the little book with a feeling that, after all, it has been an argument in the air—a deductive handling of a subject requiring close inductive study.† Diderot's anecdotes afford a very slender basis of observation for his superstructure of theory. To make

* "The Paradox of Acting," translated by Walter Herries Pollock ; with a preface by Henry Irving. London : Chatto & Windus, 1883.

† Grimm states that for many years before the date of the "Paradoxe," Diderot had gone but little to the theatre, and that his personal knowledge of the art of Le Kain, Clairon, and Quinault-Dufresne was small.

such a dialogue produce any practical result, the speakers should be, not a cat-like "First" and mouse-like "Second," but two persons of special knowledge, practical and theoretical. The one should be an actor of wide experience, the other a psychologist or mental physiologist; and it might do no harm if the latter were a bit of a logician as well. A discussion, for example, between Mr. Henry Irving and Professor Bain, if it did not establish a general principle, might at least show why such a principle is impossible.*

In a rash moment, indeed, Diderot is actually betrayed into defining "sensibility," and at once the debate is practically at an end. The definition carries with it the conclusion. No one who accepts it would think of disputing Diderot's corollary. It is shortly as follows—"Sensibility is that disposition which accompanies organic weakness, which follows on easy affection of the diaphragm, on vivacity of the imagination, on delicacy of nerves, which inclines one to loss of self-control, to being contemptuous, disdainful, to having no clear notion of what is true, good, and fine, to being unjust, to going mad." Sensibility, then, is an utterly morbid habit of mind and body, and, as such, must interfere not with acting alone, but with all healthy art whatever. This is self-evident. Any criticism of such a conclusion is futile. But how about the definition? Supposing such a multitude of effects—I have only quoted half of them—to arise from one cause, can we fairly call that cause sensibility? Hysteria, surely, is a much apter name for the disease. Substituting this term, then, we read Diderot's thesis as follows:—"The great actor must not be hysterical." Agreed. But where is the paradox?

Diderot's sensibility, however, is not to be bound by a definition. It has already assumed three or four different shapes in the course of the argument, and scarcely have we congratulated ourselves on having at last got it into a corner in the form of hysteria, when it again eludes us and sets off through another series of metamorphoses. It is impossible to enumerate the different shades of meaning attributed to it as the discussion proceeds. I shall only attempt to indicate three of its commonest and most definite phases.

* Mr. Traill, in his "New Lucian," has given imaginary effect to this idea in an ingenious dialogue between David Garrick and George Henry Lewes.

(I.) A tendency to rely on the inspiration of the moment.

(II.) A mobility of nerve and muscle, causing the actor to experience literally the physical symptoms of the passion he is imitating.

(III.) A readiness to identify oneself mentally rather than physically with the character represented, culminating in absolute absorption in the part.

Let us consider these in turn.

(I.) It is clear that reliance on the spur of the moment, whether it be wise or unwise, is possible only within very narrow limits. In any properly rehearsed play it can only apply to facial expression and tones of the voice, or, if to actions, then only in scenes of soliloquy.* When two or more persons are on the stage, their movements can no more be determined on the spur of the moment than can the movements of a watch-wheel. Each is part of a mechanism which the least lack of precision will put out of gear. Only among amateurs, or in the veriest "scratch" performances, is this rule neglected, and then not from any trust in the virtues of sensibility, but simply from bad stage-management. Diderot admirably states the object of rehearsal to be the striking of a balance between the different talents of the actors, so as to establish a general unity in the playing. This is its final function ; but its first and more obvious purpose is merely to put each of the cog-wheels in its proper place. The watch must be pieced together before it is regulated.

As for facial expression and details of utterance, few, I think, will deny that they should as far as possible be regulated beforehand. The power of so doing varies in different artists ; but, other things being equal, Diderot is right in maintaining that the greatest artist is he who can determine in advance the minutest details of his performance. The true point at issue is whether an abandonment of sensibility is necessary to this end.

(II.) The question of muscular mobility is by far the most important ; the only one, in fact, on which the disputants could seriously have differed. Here, again, we must begin by limiting the field of discussion.

Every one's experience must be sufficient to assure him that only a certain range of emotions, and these of the tender or

* Not literally true of French tragedy, in which, however, the scenes which form exceptions to the rule, are practically scenes of monologue.

pathetic order, has any power of passing through imitation into physical actuality. A man may imitate rage, terror, hatred to convincing perfection, yet his own nerve-centres will certainly not pass through the states peculiar to these passions. He will be able at any moment to drop his mask and assume another, or return to his normal state. Not so when he imitates sorrow, despair, or any emotion which peculiarly affects the lachrymal glands and the muscles of the throat. He is now conscious of a tendency to experience in his own organs the actual physical effects of the emotions he is presenting ; and the point at issue is whether he should yield to or repress this tendency.

Hamlet, I think, clearly admired the first player for having—

“ Tears in his eyes, distraction in 's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit :”

and Shakespeare, whatever he may have been in practice, was no bad theorist on acting. Diderot, on the other hand, would have taken his tears as a sign of mediocrity, and sent him to rehearse his scenes, like the Neapolitan players mentioned in the “Paradoxe,” until he was absolutely callous to their emotional effect. According to this theory, I may note in passing, the system of long runs should have an influence for good upon acting, which is not generally claimed for it. Further, Diderot's translator instances a modern actor who, in a pathetic part, found that as soon as his own tears began to flow, those of his audience dried up. So far so good. It might be argued that this arose from a difference of taste, and that the scenes and speeches which he thought most pathetic failed in themselves, apart from his rendering of them, to move his audience. His reply, however, might probably be that the same scene, if acted with real tears one night and without them the next, would affect the audience more deeply in the latter case. If so, this is a valuable individual experience ; but, to form a trustworthy conclusion, we should need to collect and test a hundred such experiences. The principle probably lies in the necessity of maintaining self-control. The physical affection of pathos does not necessarily interfere with perfect self-control, though it may in some cases, to the detriment of the required effect. The actor, as Mr. Irving justly says, has “a double consciousness,” or rather he, like everyone else, has many strata of consciousness, so that the greatest agitation of the

surface-layer may be accompanied by perfect calm beneath. While King Lear is mourning over Cordelia, and feeling in his own nerves all the symptoms of actual sorrow, another section of his mind may be keeping strict watch upon each accent and gesture, a third registering the effect of every touch upon the audience, and a fourth dwelling with pleasure or pain on private and domestic concerns — the notice in yesterday's *Telegraph* or the supper awaiting him at home. "The broken voice, the half-uttered words, the stifled or prolonged notes of agony (says Diderot) . . . all this is pure mimicry, lessons carefully learned, the grimacing of sorrow. . . . The actor is tired, you are unhappy ; he has had exertion without feeling, you feeling without exertion. Were it otherwise, the player's lot would be the most wretched on earth ; but he is not the person he represents." Who supposes that he is ? his opponent might have asked. No sane man imagines that Salvini actually goes through all the agonies of Othello any more than that he actually cuts his throat in the fifth act. To argue such a question is to argue in the air. The true question is whether the great actor may not take advantage of the fact that certain muscles naturally respond with great readiness to imagined emotions of tenderness, in order to give a crowning touch of reality to his imitation of these emotions. "The broken voice, the half-uttered words, the stifled or prolonged notes of agony" may, of course, be imitated in cold blood ; but, as our author says in another place, "raised or lowered by the twentieth part of a quarter of a tone, they would ring false." Is it not precisely by cultivating a quick responsiveness to the touch of his imagination that the great actor attunes his physical organs so as to produce with absolute truth this delicate shade of expression ?

One cannot avoid an occasional suspicion that Diderot's attack upon sensibility is in fact a covert satire upon the French classic tragedy. His other writings on the drama prove that he was no blind admirer of the so-called classic model ; and in his domestic plays he struck, however feebly, the key-note of the modern drama. His theory of dramatic poetry being thus progressive, and his theory of acting retrogressive—suited, that is, to the requirements of the very form of drama which he condemned—one cannot but suspect a satiric intention here and there. It is quite true that "touches of things common" and "droppings of warm tears"

would have been out of place in the conventional atmosphere of French pseudo-classicism. "The merest word Corneille wrote," says Diderot, "cannot be given in an every-day tone." One cannot move in the cothurnus as if sauntering down Regent Street. Conventionality in the manner of expression must clearly be proportionate to conventionality in the matter to be expressed. "The likeness of passion on the stage is not its true likeness; it is but extravagant portraiture, caricature on a grand scale, subject to conventional rules." With this extravagant portraiture the effects of emotion, physically experienced, might indeed interfere, as the tear on Peg Woffington's cheek spoiled the effect of Triplet's supposed masterpiece. But in his other writings, and in other parts of the "Paradoxe," Diderot asserts the possibility of a style of dramatic writing in which passion shall not be caricatured on a grand scale. Why, then, would he not admit a corresponding style of acting? And in arguing against it, was he not sometimes laughing in his sleeve?

(III.) "A sure way to act in a cramped, mean style," says Diderot, "is to play one's own character. You are, let us say, a tartuffe, a miser, a misanthrope; you may play your part well enough, but you will not come near what the poet has done. He has created *the* tartuffe, *the* miser, *the* misanthrope." Possibly; but what has this to do with sensibility in any conceivable sense of the term? Even if we define it as a form of hysteria, it surely cannot come into play except through imaginative sympathy with the character represented. Now, no one, however great a hypocrite or miser, can have any sort of sympathy with Tartuffe or Harpagon. It is one of the inconveniences of vice that, though there may be honour among thieves, there cannot be sympathy in any true sense of the word. Egoism is of the essence of evil. The hypocrite lives upon upright men, the miser upon liberal men; and every additional hypocrite and miser is regarded by the others as a victim the less and a competitor the more. They are not even influenced by the motives which induce open criminals to form offensive and defensive alliances. Each would like nothing better than to have a monopoly of his own vice. They are Nature's Ishmaels. Vices of sensuality establish a sort of freemasonry among their devotees, but hypocrisy and avarice serve only to isolate and harden the natures they infect.

A conscious hypocrite, even if it were possible that the triumphs and defeats of his patron saint should touch his "sensibility," would be the last to reveal the mysteries of his craft and of his own soul by playing Tartuffe. To do so would be to throw away, not to assume, a mask; and his mask is his stock-in-trade. An unconscious hypocrite, if naturally unctuous in manner (which by no means follows), might have a peculiar facility in entering "into the skin" of Tartuffe; but this has nothing whatever to do with the question of sensibility. No one thinks of engaging a murderer to play Macbeth, not because his sensibility would lead him to enter with incongruous fervour into the character, but because the very idea is an absurdity. In arguing against such an assumption, Diderot insults the intelligence of his submissive interlocutor.

To find firm ground for a contest on this point, we must turn again to the tender emotions. Suppose two lovers are playing "Romeo and Juliet": will their passion make them act well or ill? Ill, without doubt, would be Diderot's reply; and I, for my part, am not prepared to maintain that they would play better than any actor and actress of equal powers who should be perfectly indifferent to each other. Their passion would probably not make so much difference, for better or worse, as to be observable from the auditorium. It would manifest itself in the trifling details of personal by-play, which are only visible to those who are literally or metaphorically behind the scenes. It would doubtless make them play their parts with peculiar pleasure to themselves, and might thus add a crowning touch of self-abandoning intensity to their performance; though if this crowning touch is absent from the playing of artists who are indifferent to each other, it merely proves that they have not mastered their craft. On the other hand, I cannot see how a mutual passion should interfere with the effect of their performance, so long as they respect their art and do not wantonly break through the illusion to indulge in inappropriate and frivolous trivialities.

Diderot relates several anecdotes of great artists, who, in scenes of intense passion, had the presence of mind to turn to account accidents which otherwise would have spoiled the effect. From this he concludes that they were not absorbed in their parts, or in other words did not feel what they were acting. Nothing could in reality be less conclusive. The manifold activity of the human

mind at any given moment is again left out of account.* Intense feeling by no means implies an absorption of consciousness in the prevailing emotion of the moment. On the contrary, its effect is often to sharpen our faculties in every other direction. We all know how our memory registers the smallest details of any scene which has witnessed a crisis in our lives. Some of us, too, know how, even under the first shock of a great catastrophe, we attend with mechanical punctiliousness to the minutest trifles of every-day existence. Thus Le Kain, as Ninias, immediately after having murdered his mother in his father's tomb, instead of treading on an actress's diamond earring, kicks it into the wing. But this is far from proving that he did not intensely feel the situation. The actual Ninias, under the same circumstances, had he found a jewel lying in his path, would probably have picked it up and put it in his pocket. Men led to execution have been known to be very particular about details of their dress. A murderer is said to have borrowed an umbrella from the sheriff lest he should catch cold. Sir Thomas More jested with the headsman. Charles II., with the death-rattle in his throat, apologized to his courtiers for being such an unconscionable time in dying. All these persons may be presumed to have felt their situation deeply, and no situation can well be more absorbing than that of a man in the jaws of death. I do not think it would be quite paradoxical to maintain that the person most likely to be disconcerted by trifles on the stage is the actor who is *not* absorbed in his part, who is playing it entirely from his intellect and with no spontaneous feeling. The argument might run as follows:—An unexpected incident is much more disturbing in an ill-rehearsed than in a well-rehearsed play. Now the man who plays from his intellect is not he who has thoroughly rehearsed his part, but he who has neglected to master its

* Fanny Kemble, an excellent authority, has some acute and striking observations on this point:—"The curious part of acting to me," she says, "is the sort of double process which the mind carries on at once, the combined operation of one's faculties, so to speak, in diametrically opposite directions; for instance, in that very last scene of Mrs. Beverley, while I was half dead with crying in the midst of the *real* grief, created by an entirely *unreal* cause, I perceived that my tears were falling like rain all over my silk dress, and spoiling it; and I calculated and measured most accurately the space that my father would require to fall in, and moved myself and my train accordingly in the midst of the anguish I was to feign, and absolutely did endure. . . . In short, while the whole person appears to be merely following the mind in producing the desired effect and illusion upon the spectator, both the intellect and the senses are constantly engrossed in guarding against the smallest accidents that might militate against it."—*Records of a Girlhood*, vol. ii. p. 103.

mechanical details. The effort to find his words and to remember the required action occupies his attention, and excludes all possibility of truly feeling the situation. As regards the individual actor, the great function of rehearsal is to make him so thoroughly at home in the externals of his part, so to speak, that his faculties shall be at liberty to respond to its shifting emotions. It is only when carried to an absurd excess that rehearsal begets the dull automatism which Diderot seems to recommend. Within reasonable limits, its effect is to set free, not to repress, sensibility ; and the man who is moving with easy freedom through his part is least likely to be put out by unrehearsed trifles. Spontaneity in acting is not, as Diderot seems to think, haphazard reliance on chance. The practised swimmer who has acquired confidence in the water moves spontaneously—not the splashing and struggling learner. Each new part is, as it were, a new element to the actor. Only when he has gained perfect confidence can he move through it with spontaneity, freedom, and grace. Then will he be best prepared to turn accidents to account ; and then, as a concomitant but infinitely more important effect, he will be able to make the best use of his natural sensibility.

It is impossible to tell when Diderot is wandering intentionally, and when unconsciously, from the point at issue. In trying to systematize his arguments, I have no doubt to some extent misrepresented them, and I have certainly left many unnoticed. His remarks on the personal character of actors, for instance, are more or less irrelevant ; nor is it necessary to consider his theory of the general relation of sensibility to genius. It is, I think, to be kept in mind that he calls his dialogue a Paradox, and is not afraid of making it paradoxical to the extent of self-contradiction. The word "paradox" is variously interpreted, but according to one common use it denotes the emphatic and exaggerated statement of one side of a case, the other side being purposely suppressed. That Diderot was not ignorant of the other side, and could if he had wished have provided it with a much better champion than his ineffectual "Second" speaker, is proved by the following passage from a letter to Mademoiselle Jodin, written a few years earlier. In the first sentence, it will be observed, he overstates the necessity of absorption as much as, in the "Paradoxe," he understates it : " Si, quand vous êtes sur le théâtre, vous ne croyez pas être seule

tout est perdu. . . . Un acteur qui n'a que du sens et du jugement est froid ; celui qui n'a que de la verve et de la sensibilité est fou. C'est un certain tempérament de bons sens et de chaleur qui fait l'homme sublime ; et sur la scène et dans le monde, celui qui montre plus qu'il ne sent fait rire au lieu de toucher."



Scenery, Dresses, and Decorations.

BY GODFREY TURNER.

WHEN we discourse of modern—that is, quite recent—triumphs of theatrical effect, we (I don't say *I*, for this is not one of my bad habits) too often slight the past. Pageantry was even better understood by our forefathers than it is by ourselves—that is, by our stage-managers and stage-machinists. The records of old masques, processions, and the like, are too circumstantial, too matter-of-fact in their descriptive and technical phraseology, to be suspected of fanciful and laudatory exaggeration. Nor should we refuse to credit wonders, when they are told of an engineer and architect himself so wonderful in fertility of invention and in resources of ingenuity as Inigo Jones. If Miss Ænea can be helped by hidden machinery to bound in mid-air, why should belief be withheld from the great seventeenth-century mechanist's invisibly suspended globe, turning softly, and disclosing magical effects by land and sea? Read the memoirs of Ben Jonson for most authentic accounts of the costly and tasteful inventions with which his Doric delicacies were accompanied and adorned. Though we may have outlived the appreciation and enjoyment of these last, though the exquisite playfulness of the song-in-dialogue between a Silvan and an Hour be no longer a charm for audiences who gloat over the murder and mutilation of lovely Greek myths, and can bear without a pang the importation of vulgar matrimonial bitterness and cynic laughter to the purest and loveliest of them all—the psychical mystery of Pygmalion—still we are judges of scenery, lovers of dresses, and connoisseurs of decorations ; and we may find amusement and interest in the accounts of royal masques, the spectacular appointments of which cost

thousands on thousands of pounds when the purchasing power of money was far greater than it is at the present day.

But I am not going back to James or Charles I. for matter to make magazine-padding. In *THE THEATRE*, I take it, we meet to tell our experiences and what we know ; to criticize things we have seen and heard on the stage and in connection with it ; and I suspect that were I to fail in doing this, or, at all events, were I not to try, my friend and comrade the Editor—one of the most peaceable men on the earth when his judgment is not outraged or his good nature imposed upon—would return my MS. with comments shrewder than agreeable. I am not so stricken in hoar antiquity that I can pretend to remember a time when stage-plays did not rely to a large extent on scenery, dresses, and decorations; but I am aware that, a little before my time, these were apt to be somewhat slovenly and unhandsome, and that, contrary to an older practice, the scenic mounting of the drama was almost wholly confined to the painting of wings, flats, and borders, the stage being very meagrely furnished. I say, contrary to an older practice, because I cannot doubt that most of the elaborate scenery of those lordly masques and pageants stood out “in relieve or whole round,” like that most memorable Temple of Artemis at the Lyceum, or the Corinthian portico of Leonato’s house in “*Much Ado about Nothing*.” So little was that the custom at the beginning, say, of the present century, so little furniture or modelled representation of real objects was there on the boards, that Leigh Hunt, as I remember, spoke of the Kembles, and their practice of sitting at a real table in a real chair, as examples of theatrical innovation, and the artifices of a new school. The only scenic backgrounds were flats, run on in pairs, and with greasy black finger-marks down the middle join, which divided as often as not the trim perspective of a gravel-walk. Those dear, dingy, old flats, only to be seen now-a-days at the merry matinée or the brisk and bounteous “ben”!

It must have been very early in Leigh Hunt’s youthful career as a dramatic critic—and, as I am speaking from mere impression, and without access to books, I may safeguard myself by owning a doubt, only the thin edge of a doubt, whether it was Leigh Hunt at all—when the reference to the Kemble properties was made. Somewhat later, the genial critic of the *Examiner*, the *Tatler*, and the *London Journal* wrote, in that charming, con-

fidentially editorial manner which endeared him to all his readers, respecting some piece which was well mounted :—"When we were tired of the actors we took a walk in the scenery." Remember, it was probably Stanfield or David Roberts, or it might have been Loutherbouurg, who painted that very scene in which an imaginative spectator well might lose himself, though in the meantime some necessary question of the play were then to be considered. Scene-painting was at the height of excellence, not only at the "patent" houses, but at some of the minor theatres, when there was yet little art in stage-arrangement, when the old-fashioned wings were run-on, or retired, in grooves ; and when, if everything at the sides of the stage had not been in flat profile, Macready, in "Hamlet," would have lost many opportunities of displaying his wonderful skill in fence. It was this great tragedian's custom, when trying his foil in the last scene, to make a spring and a lunge together, hitting the edge of the wing nearest the footlights with unerring certainty. There are no wings with edges now in our elaborate interior sets. But in Macready's earlier time, the excellent plan of enclosing a room upon the stage had scarcely been thought of. Then it was, I say, that stage-effect depended far more on the scene-painter's brush than it does now. Then it was that two such distinguished members of the Royal Academy as Roberts and Stanfield beautified the drama. I have beheld, within the past very few years, remnants of Loutherbouurg's scenery stowed away at the Adelphi, and I dare say it would cut an odd figure, from its age and dinginess, if trotted out now with the bright rusticity and mechanical realism of Messieurs. Hann and Hall. While Stanfield painted landscapes on a big scale for Drury Lane, a host of clever scenic artists were coming on. The Grieves and Telbins had their principal triumphs before them. Shrewd and practical Albert Smith, a seer and prophet of things popular, foretold fame for many a youngster who has since achieved it. I have elsewhere quoted some good-natured jingle from a comic rhyme of "Beauty and the Beast," which is no reason why I should not quote it again, so here it is :—

Pitt, Beverley, and Brunning, too,
Who will, one day, some great things do,
Judging from what their genius yields,
In Wych Street and St. George's Fields."

Archæology came upon the stage, if I may so speak, with a

rush. Excellently mounted as were all Macready's productions, the appropriateness of scenery, costume, and accessories, though highly lauded by critics of his time, came far short of historical accuracy. He dressed Othello, Hamlet, and Macbeth in accordance with a trite conventional fashion. Hamlet he played after the pattern of John Kemble, as preserved in Lawrence's lugubrious picture, with the funereal ostrich-plumes and black-velvet cloak, like a pall; and in the scene immediately following Ophelia's startling account of his seeming madness, he came upon the stage with hose falling about his heels. He wore tartans in Macbeth, leaving to Phelps the honour of first presenting the lowland chief in barbaric tunic, diagonally striped cloak, and cross-gartered buskins or sandals. Phelps, as I have always insisted, led the way for Charles Kean's archæological elaborations, and deserved the lion's share of glory as a Shakesperean illustrator and revivalist. It was not the mode then, nor till very recently, indeed, to bestow much thought on the comfort of the audience or on anything in front of the green-baize curtain. The old proscenium at Sadler's Wells was the last of a type now obsolete. Like the toy-theatres, it had on each side a door, with a gilt knocker. Green baize not only formed the curtain, but carpeted the front of the stage. There was an old act-drop which, I rather think, was there when Phelps and Greenwood, with Mrs. Warner in nominal association with the first-named manager, took the house. As a young pittance I was present one evening when a misfortune befel this same act-drop, which bore in the right foreground the presentment of a forester holding a couple of greyhounds, eager to get free. A piece of scenery falling forward made a jagged, angular rent just about this part of the painting; and for a long, long time afterwards my sight was as tediously accustomed to this rent in the act-drop—artlessly mended with packthread—as was my hearing to Boildieu's overture to "La Dame Blanche," invariably played as an introduction by the strictly economic orchestra. Phelps, the last time he came to see me, a little before his death, gave an amusingly candid account of the pinchings and scrapings at the old "Wells," the close-clipped salaries, the cuttings down in the wardrobe and property department, and the shifts imposed on the scene-painter. And yet there was no sign of starving in the representations. Scholarship and taste, laborious rehearsals, persistent drillings, did more than

money could ever do. When good, brave, simple-hearted, and manly Henry Marston was not learning his part, or attending to business in the theatre, he was poring over authorities in the old library of the British Museum. The Fentons—Charles and Frederick, members of a hard-working theatrical family—helped might and main; the former constantly increasing in bulk, so that he must have had to let out many a reef of his harlequin suit when pantomime season came round again; and the latter painting away at some of the most picturesque works of illusory art that ever assisted the imagination of play-going folk at Sadler's Wells or elsewhere.

Important reforms in scenery, dresses, and decorations were made successively by Phelps, Charles Kean, and Fechter. We have now Irving to challenge comparison with their illustrious memories; and in the more restricted scope of modern stage-illustration—in the materialistic adornment proper to dramas of to-day—the managements of Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, of Messieurs Hare and Kendal, and of Messieurs Clayton and Cecil, leave nothing to be desired. But my business here is with the past. I shall come no later than Fechter; and I shall venture to dwell especially on Phelps, as really the first in my time to set rolling a ball of dramatic reformation which has been well kept up, with some few intermissions, ever since.

I have never hesitated in the belief that two or three of those plays which received the thoughtful treatment of Phelps and his company, at the suburban Theatre, by the New River Head, and were afterwards revived at the Princess's, showed more intelligence of preparation in the first place than in the second. I refer to "The Tempest" and "Macbeth" especially. It seems to me unquestionable that Charles Kean, after the lapse of a very few years, took the Sadler's Wells representation of "Macbeth" as his model, and did not improve on it. He certainly followed Phelps in the costumes, which, by their departure from stage-tradition, involved a fine historical idea. He did *not* follow Phelps in close adherence to Shakespeare's text and stage-directions; nor, so to speak, did Phelps follow himself; seeing that, having marked out a certain course, he pursued it only for a few nights or weeks at most. I was in the crowded pit on the first night of "Macbeth" at Sadler's Wells, when the truly Shakespearean scene of Macduff's castle was given, when there

was a Lady Macduff, for the first and almost the last time in any living playgoer's memory. Miss Cooper was not required to play the brief but strongly tragic part during the whole run. It was deemed expedient, though I do not know why, to cut out the scene. There is a quaint stage-direction towards the end of the play, which was fulfilled on the first night, but, I think, on the first night only. It runs thus: "Enter Macduff with Macbeth's head on a pole." The head was not well modelled. It did not look deathly; it was too small; it bore no facial resemblance to the actor; and there was not that shrinking, that entire annihilation of the neck, which was graphically noted by Charles Dickens after he had seen a criminal guillotined. With less complication, there was more effect in the appearance and vanishing of the witches on the stage of Sadler's Wells, than at Kean's house in Oxford Street. All supernatural apparitions, somehow, were well managed on that lesser stage. When the Weird Sisters, played by A. Younge, Scharf, and a third, whose name I forget, were discovered at the beginning of the third scene—the dark and stormy heath—there lay in front of them, unseen and unobserved by the majority, something like a long ridge of black sand. It was a folded gauze curtain, so contrived that it could be drawn up by invisible threads; and it was made in gradually thickened folds till at last it became thoroughly opaque. Beginning to rise imperceptibly over the darkened scene, it obscured the witches, as with "fog and filthy air," and, without moving, they positively vanished. By such simple means were produced at the Wells effects sufficiently startling and illusory for dramatic purposes. The vanishing of the ghost in "Hamlet" was never accomplished more strikingly than on that suburban stage. It was Phelp's idea to seat the spirit of Banquo amid the guests. I am one of those who, with the heartiest respect for nearly all that Hazlitt has given us in the way of criticism, cannot concur in his suggestion that, inasmuch as Banquo's ghost is only seen by Macbeth in his distempered mind, the figure should not come upon the stage at all. You might say the same of the spirit of Hamlet's father, in the closet-scene, for Queen Gertrude can neither see the shade nor hear what it says in reply to Hamlet. With regard to Banquo's ghost, the direction given by Shakespeare is positive, and cannot be overcome. There are many instances in dramatic literature of characters treading

the stage, in full view of the spectators, and yet with supposed invisibility. Altogether, the Sadler's Wells "Macbeth," besides having the advantage of priority, was superior in the strictness of its Shakspearean good faith to the "Macbeth" of the Princess's. It needed courage in those days to forego, and to force an audience to forego, Locke's music. But, beyond courage, the management had that yet more valuable faculty, straitness of means. There was always a good deal of doubling at the Wells, and, besides the second witch, George Scharf played the Porter. Good practice this! And the audience got the benefit of so much careful discrimination of character.

Collectors of theatrical portraits and connoisseurs of lithography will call to mind a dainty piece of work by the prince of lithographic artists, Mr. Lane, the subject being Miss Priscilla Horton as the delicate Ariel, floating in the air. When "The Tempest" was produced at Covent Garden, with this fair young lady as the tricky spirit, not a new scene had been painted, not a new dress made. But the revival was an unexpected hit. Charmed by the spirit of the performance, and overlooking, because unsuspecting, the staleness of the appointments on the stage—some of which, indeed, may have been so old as to be positively new—the critics wrote nothing but praise; and a long run being thus assured, fresh scenery was painted bit by bit and lifted in. It was long after this when Phelps gave "The Tempest" at Sadler's Wells; and substituting a mimic ship, tossed on a carpet sea, for the spoken scene of Shakespeare, opened the play with a robust and vivid effectiveness which was well maintained throughout. I never saw "The Tempest" so well given as at the "Wells." It is not now my cue to speak at large of the acting; though to be sure I cannot cheat my memory of the pleasure which was given me by Phelps as Prospero, Laura Addison as Miranda, Henry Marston as Ferdinand, George Bennett as Caliban, A. Younge as Stephano, Scharf as Trinculo, H. Mellon, Hoskins, Belford, and Graham as the shipwrecked king and his companions, and the winsome Julia St. George as Ariel. This last performance gave me greatest delight. I have since heard from Phelps himself that he had some trouble in teaching this young lady—then very young—to speak Ariel's lines according to his intention; but I knew nothing of that, and her thrilling, passionate delivery (as the harpy) of the speech, "You are three men of sin," with its sustained denunciation,

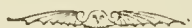
and sudden rise of defiant energy, at once scornful and elated, at the words, "You fools" (when Alonzo, Sebastian, and Antonio draw their swords), ring in my ears now. The speech, a long and trying one, had been appropriated, in former representations of the play, by Prospero. Even Macready did this thing, to his censure be it said ; and Phelps gained the thanks of the judicious by relinquishing, or rather restoring, to his faithful Ariel the applause. Very aptly and with doubled meaning came Prospero's after-words :—

Bravely the figure of this harpy hast thou
Performed, my Ariel ; a grace it had, devouring :
Of my instruction hast thou nothing 'bated,
In what thou hadst to say.

And Phelps, as Phelps, rather than as Prospero, seemed to speak out of his managerial heart when he thus poured forth his full-measured approbation. On the whole, I was far from being so satisfied with Charles Kean's version of "The Tempest." It was much more elaborate, and this was a mistake ; for in dealing with the supernatural it is a fault of vulgarity and a sin against imagination to make, or try to make, the supernatural real. Kean's triumphs, as I shall presently find cause to remark, were in the historical plays. Not an atom of his lavish antiquarian pomp was wasted on these. But he himself was a prosaic man, with no scruple of fancy to disturb a strictly commonplace conscience. Witness his pedantic correction of Byron's geography in "Sardanapalus"—the alteration, that is to say, of the river's name, without corresponding alteration (obviously easy) of the lines in which it occurs ; so that, between Euphrates and Tigris, Tigris and Euphrates, the metre hobbled like Wolcot's pilgrim with the penitential peas. A delicate, tricky Ariel, indeed, was Miss Kate Terry at the Princess's, and she seemed no more than a bat might bear without feeling the burden. Blue and star-like shone her eyes in the light of the artificial moon. But she was very young at the time, with all her histrionic power folded in the bud of girlish grace ; and I think my memory serves me well enough to let me say that Charles Kean spoke Ariel's proper lines, indignantly addressed to those "three men of sin," King Alonzo, his treacherous brother, and the usurping Duke of Milan. If the lady who should have spoken them, and who can show us very well how they ought to be spoken, *did* speak them, I beg her pardon.

When mentioning Miss St. George but now, I ought to have recounted her additional service to the interpretation of this play, by appearing as Juno in the masque. Here was another notable instance of useful doubling at Sadler's Wells.

Many were Charles Kean's historical triumphs at the Princess's Theatre ; but I shall touch upon two only—to wit, "Richard II." and "Henry VIII." Nothing could possibly exceed the care lavished on these productions. As far as semblance could be carried to reality, the scenes in both plays certainly went. The lists on Gosford Green, with Norfolk and Bolingbroke armed for the combat, and their destriers champing their bits on either side ; the chamber of John of Gaunt in Ely Place ; and the interpolated dumb-show, between the fourth and fifth acts, realizing the description subsequently given by York to his Duchess, of Richard's entry to London at the heels of Bolingbroke. In the latter play, accurate research was even more varied and defined. Such multiplied industry of historical detail could never have been seen before, and certainly has not been repeated, though a creditable attempt was made but a few years ago at Manchester to revive "Henry VIII." on a scale approximate to that of Charles Kean's magnificent representation. But space has failed me, or I have outrun it ; and I must crave indulgence till next month, when I hope to resume, by permission, these reminiscences of vanished scenery, outworn dresses, and age-bedimmed decorations.



Friends Old and New.

MAKE new friends but keep the old,
Those are silver, these are gold ;
New-made friendships, like new wine,
Age will mellow and refine.
Friendships that have stood the test,
Time, and change are surely best ;
Brow may wrinkle, hair grow grey,
Friendship never owns decay.
For 'mid old friends, tried and true,
We once more our youth renew ;
But old friends, alas ! may die,
New friends must their place supply.
Cherish friendship in your breast,
New is good, but old is best ;
Make new friends but keep the old,
Those are silver, these are gold.

Coleridge as a Dramatist.

SO Coleridge's "Remorse" is to be played again, after the lapse of more than half a century! Many a play, and many a fine play too, has glittered for a brief space behind the footlights and faded back into the dark again, since Leigh Hunt went into raptures over it in *The Examiner*, and the class to which Leigh Hunt belonged applauded Mrs. Glover for just so many nights as would secure her a *succès d'estime* in the eyes of the world. The very names connected with it have got that antiquated ring about them which is the first step on the road to classicism. Everything else, which is not a name, has been forgotten; and we must thank the present rage for something new which has once more called it to remembrance.

A novelty that is seventy-one years old hardly sounds like a new thing at all on first hearing. But then there are two classes of novelty—novelties ancient and novelties modern; and we should miss a good deal of excitement in the theatrical world, just now, if we ignored the former. "Princess Ida" herself, though she is only two or three nights' old—the infant "Claudian," who scarcely yet numbers two out of the twelve months of his probable existence—are not more novel, in one sense, than will be Coleridge's "Remorse" to the theatre-going public. Poets very seldom write our plays for us now; we are not accustomed to such dainty fare. We have come to accept Shakespeare as we accept roast beef on Sundays; otherwise, we are well content with French cookery, and the trifles and tipsy-cakes served up for us by the leading dramatists of the period. Now and then we get a solid pudding in the way of melodrama; but it is a very new idea indeed, and one which has only come into full swing within the last few years, to organize revivals of such ancient dishes as must, one would think, be "caviare to the general." Still, we know how the learned guests in "Romola" were very much impressed when the peacock appeared at table, even though they found it rather indigestible. But the men of this generation have stronger stomachs—even the Greek "Birds" of Aristophanes in their original plumage are not too much for them. Why, everything

may be revived after that. Suppose we try the unique Hebrew play, written by one Ezechiël—goodness knows when—what could be more interesting? Suppose we resuscitate Hans Sachs, with Adam and Eve washing and dressing Cain and Abel, in mediæval German? Suppose we give Marlowe's "Dr. Faustus," or a cycle of "rare Ben Jonson" (rare now in more senses than one), and then slope gradually down to modern times*—"Remorse" and Mr. Thick—by way of Webster, Congreve, Otway, Addison, and Co.?

Why, indeed, "Remorse" should have been chosen out of such a number of beautiful dead plays, or plays that have never lived except in black and white, may seem a little difficult to understand. Few contain passages of greater beauty—many, to an inexperienced eye at least, seem more dramatic. In Coleridge's mind, philosophy, poetry, and criticism were always fighting for the upper hand; his philosophy is that of a critic, his criticism that of a philosopher, but the best part of his poetry is that of a true lyric poet, untouched by either philosophy or criticism—rhythmical, evanescent, fragmentary, full of a subtle yet simple charm, that cannot and will not be defined. Who would ever think of analysing "The Ancient Mariner," or going deep into the motives of "Christabel?" We could as soon dissect one of Blake's angels, or lecture on the anatomy of an elf by Dicky Doyle. They are creatures that never for a moment run the risk of coming in contact with actual reality—dream-children of another sphere, lovely and full of grace, but owing no kinship with the earth-born. When their author and father descended from those heights, where truly "the winds came to him from the fields of sleep," and tried to make them clay brothers and sisters, who should walk and talk, and make love like ordinary heroes and heroines, he found that life according to real conditions was a far more difficult thing to realize than the weird forms and varying lights and colours of the most fantastic vision. The glare of noonday dazzled him; the hard outlines of fact limited and constrained his power. To write a play like those of the so-called "Realistic School," would have been impossible to him as a poet. He therefore took the most romantic story he could find on this side Fairyland—a story invented ready to his hand by Schiller's "Geisterseher"—and then did everything that in him lay, to

* "Modern," comparatively speaking, and yet how far removed from ours!

remove it as far as might be from the present, changing the scene from Italy to Spain, changing the date from 1700 to 1600, and adding a wild woman of his own, whom he called Alhadra, who must have considerably astonished Schiller's orthodox young couple, when she was first introduced to them. The result is neither tragedy nor melodrama, but a romance in five acts—a dramatic romance we might call it, if Mr. Browning had not already laid claim to the title. There are other plays of the same class—Heine's "*Almansor*," for instance—which have the same exquisite facility of verse, the same jerky, mechanical action, and want of unity. Yet now and then there are bursts of fury in "*Remorse*" which the mocking fiend of Heine would never have allowed him to indulge in; witness the grand scene at the end of the fourth act, in which Alhadra calls upon the Moors to rise. Alhadra, and Alhadra alone, has the breath and stuff of individual life in her; the passion of the whole play centres in her vehement hatred. Compare her description of imprisonment in the first act, with Alvar's experience of the same in the fifth, and you feel the difference between fire and ice. These are the woman's burning words:—

“ I was a Moresco !

They cast me, then a young and nursing mother,
 Into a dungeon of their prison-house ;
 Where was no bed, no fire, no ray of light,
 No touch, no sound of comfort ! The black air,
 It was a toil to breathe it ! when the door,
 Slow opening at the appointed hour, disclosed
 One human countenance, the lamp's red flame
 Cowered as it entered, and at once sank down.
 Oh miserable ! by that lamp to see
 My infant quarrelling with the coarse hard bread
 Brought daily : for the little wretch was sickly—
 My rage had dried away its natural food.
 In darkness I remained—the dull bell counting,
 Which haply told me that the all-cheering sun
 Was rising on our garden. When I dozed,
 My infant's moanings mingled with my slumbers,
 And waked me. If you were a mother, lady,
 I should scarce dare to tell you, that its noises
 And peevish cries so fretted on my brain,
 That I have struck the innocent babe in anger.”

Now listen to Alvar:—

“ And this place my forefathers made for man !
 This is the process of our love and wisdom
 To each poor brother who offends against us—
 Most innocent, perhaps—and what if guilty ?
 Is this the only cure ? Merciful God !

Each pore and natural outlet shrivelled up
 By ignorance and parching poverty,
 His energies roll back upon his heart
 And stagnate and corrupt, till, changed to poison,
 They break out on him, like a loathsome plague-spot !
 Then we call in our pampered mountebanks ;
 And this is their best cure ! un comforted
 And friendless solitude, groaning and tears
 And savage faces, at the clanking hour,
 Seen through the steam and vapours of his dungeon
 By the lamp's dismal twilight ! So he lies
 Circled with evil, till his very soul
 Unmoulds its essence, hopelessly deformed
 By sights of evermore deformity !
 With other ministrations thou, O Nature !
 Healest thy wandering and distempered child ;
 Thou pourest on him thy soft influences,
 Thy sunny hues, fair forms, and breathing sweets ;
 Thy melodies, of woods, and winds, and waters !
 Till he relent, and can no more endure
 To be a jarring and a dissonant thing
 Amid the general dance and minstrelsy ;
 But, bursting into tears, wins back his way,
 His angry spirit healed and harmonized
 By the benignant touch of love and beauty.

I am chilled and weary ! Yon rude bench of stone,
 In that dark angle, the sole resting-place !
 But the self-approving mind is its own light,
 And life's best warmth still radiates from the heart,
 Where love sits brooding, and an honest purpose."

A note at the end of the play tells us that Sir G. Beaumont sat for the portrait of Alvar, which perhaps accounts for his lack of individuality ; a living English baronet must have been hard to translate into Spanish. Certainly this lover is no Romeo. Far be it from him to cry, " Hang up philosophy, unless philosophy can make a Juliet." His " self-approving mind," &c., gives him great consolation. There is something ludicrously feeble too in his first aside, after he sees Teresa :—

" She deems me dead, yet wears no mourning garment !
 Why should my brother's . . . wife . . . wear mourning garments ?"

Ordonio, the villain, is more interesting ; indeed, on coming to that fine passage, which is evidently intended to give us the key to his whole character, we wonder that he is not much more interesting :—

" What, if his very virtues
 Had pampered his swollen heart and made him proud ?
 And what if pride had duped him into guilt ?
 Yet still he stalked a self-created god,
 Not very bold, but exquisitely cunning ;

And one that at his mother's looking-glass
 Would force his features to a frowning sternness?
 Young Lord! I tell thee that there are such beings—
 Yea, and it gives fierce merriment to the damned,
 To see these most proud men, that loath mankind,
 At every stir and buzz of coward conscience,
 Trick, cant, and lie, most whining hypocrites!"

This kind of villain is rare enough in plays: had Coleridge realized his own conception, Ordonio might have become a type, instead of only the shadow of one.

Coleridge's darling was visibly Teresa—Teresa with her fresh, enthusiastic faith, her maidenly devotion, her tenderness and pity. She is far more beautiful than her prototype, Antonie, in the "*Geisterseher*;" Schiller might have let her play with his own favourite Thekla, when they were both babies. Like many other sweet women, she does not speak much, but we feel the influence of her "gracious silence," whenever she appears.

Of the other persons in the drama, we have not much to say. Isidore is chiefly a collection of fine descriptive passages. Here there is an echo of Wordsworth:—

"'Tis a poor idiot boy,
 Who sits in the sun, and twirls a bough about,
 His weak eyes seethed in most unmeaning tears,
 And so he sits, swaying his cone-like head,
 And staring at his bough from morn to sunset,
 See-saws his voice in inarticulate noises."

There of Dante—

"A hellish pit! The very same I dreamt of!
 I was just in—and those damned fingers of ice
 Which clutched my hair up!"

His, too, are the shadowy moonlight lines in act iv., and his the ghastly words—

"If every atom of a dead man's flesh
 Should creep, each one with a particular life,
 Yet all as cold as ever . . . 'twas just so!"

After Alhadra and the Moors, the incantation scene is perhaps the most striking in the play. As a bit of really spiritual magic, of poetic clairvoyance, what could be finer than Alvar's speech?—

"Of that innumerable company
 Who in broad circle, lovelier than the rainbow,
 Girdle this round earth in a dizzy motion,
 With noise too vast and constant to be heard."

Whether or no such things as these will be sufficient to redeem

the piece before the eyes of a modern audience, remains to be proved, but in any case let us be grateful for an experiment which cannot fail to be interesting.

A.



Our Musical-Box.

"NELL GWYNNE."

An Opera Comique in Three Acts, music by ROBERT PLANQUETTE, written and produced by H. B. FARNIE, for the first time, at the Avenue Theatre, on Thursday, February 7, 1884.

Charles II.	MR. A. WHEATMAN.	Marjorie	MISS VICTORIA REYNOLDS.
Buckingham	MR. M. DWYER.	Prue... ..	MISS BESSIE BELL.
Rochester	MR. A. CADWALADR.	Sue	MISS RICHARDS.
Falcon	MR. HENRY WALSHAM.	Roger	MISS CLIFFORD.
Talbot	MR. CECIL CROFTON.	Ned... ..	MISS DEACON.
Weasel	MR. ARTHUR ROBERTS.	Wat... ..	MISS VORKE.
The Beadle	MR. LIONEL BROUGH.	Simon	MISS DAWSON.
Hodge	MR. D. ST. JOHN.	Robin	MISS CALLAWAY.
Podge	MR. HUNT.	Ralph	MISS HOWE.
Peregrine	MISS AGNES LYNDON.	Phœbe	MISS M. HARWOOD.
Nell Gwynne... ..	MISS FLORENCE ST. JOHN.	Dorothy... ..	MISS WENTWORTH.
Lady Falbala... ..		Maud	MISS HEATHFIELD.
Joan	MISS AGNES STONE.	Lettice	MISS DOUGLAS.
Zaphet, the Gipsy		Dorcas	MISS SEARLE.
Clare	MISS GUILIA WARWICK.	Priscilla	MISS HUNTLEY.
Jessamine			

MUSICALLY speaking, "Nell Gwynne" is the most meritorious work to which M. Planquette has as yet put his name. It teems with agreeable melodies of which I, for one, think none the worse because they are a thought less "popular" in character—less contagiously vulgar, that is to say—than certain favourite tunes belonging to former creations of his fancy, which made his reputation, in this country at least, as an operetta composer. The instrumental music of "Nell Gwynne" also exhibits marked improvement upon M. Planquette's previous works. When this talented gentleman began to compose for the stage he knew very little, if anything, about the science of orchestration. His latest production proves that he has laboured steadfastly, intelligently, and above all successfully, to acquire the knowledge that was formerly lacking to him. The overture, incidental music, and accompaniments, to "Nell Gwynne" are scored with a masterly hand, and abound in instrumental combinations as ingeniously utilized, if not absolutely novel, as they are pleasing to the ear and stimulating to the memory. M. Planquette's treatment of his themes in the orchestra is seldom "thin," and still more rarely wanting in colour. It is sufficiently interesting to suggest the wish to hear it again. From the theatrical *habitué's* point of view I could scarcely accord it higher praise. In a word, the musical moiety of "Nell Gwynne" is so far above the operetta average as to justify the belief that its composer is capable of constructing works upon a larger scale and of a higher class.

To listen to the libretto of "Nell Gwynne" is to be saddened by a sense of wasted opportunities. No playwright surely could have wished for a more

fertile or suggestive subject, nor for a better chance of interesting as well as diverting a long series of audiences mainly composed of English folk, to whom the light-hearted orange-girl, popular actress and favourite odalisque of the *Merry Monarch*, chosen by Mr. Farnie as the heroine of his "book," has been a sympathetic historical figure for many a year. To say that he has treated his subject feebly and incoherently is to let the literary author of "*Nell Gwynne*" down very easily. The plot is labyrinthine; the action frequently incongruous and sometimes unintelligible; the "comic imbroglio" (thus quaintly designated in the *Argument*) so intricate as to be distressful instead of gladdening. Few incidents occur in the play with respect to which the average spectator, abruptly exhorted to account for what is going on upon the stage, could furnish an explanation satisfactory to himself or his interrogator. It is advisable not to attempt to follow the story too closely, for "that way madness lies!" Men with rabbit-skins and guitars come and go, no one can imagine why; beadles and ratcatchers are doubled until they lose their senses, which is really not to be wondered at under the circumstances; nobody is himself or herself for many minutes at a stretch, and everybody is somebody else "by turns, and nothing long."

Casting a friendly and well-wishing glance at the lyrics, I was glad to observe some very pleasing and ingenious verses here and there, as, for instance, those sung by *Nell Gwynne* in the first act ("Only an orange-girl"), and her romance ("First love") in act ii.; contrasted, however, with so many unmeaning lines and slipshod rhymes that, but for the formal announcement on the title-page of the book of words, I should have fancied that more hands than one had been busied with the libretto, and that at least one of its co-fabricators had been a tyro in his trade. Not even the chartered literary libertinage of English operatic librettists can excuse such maleficent rhyming as "collar" to "stroller," "riddle" to "beadle," "superhuman" to "woman," or "essences" to "sweeter is;" nor is it permissible in a writer of light verse to bewilder and gravel his readers with such Sphynxian lines as this:—

"Ah! work-a-day life's hard, but at ev'ning all passes;"

or this:—

"Lo! the little brooklet wimpling."

A singer (act iii.) is made to deprecate the minuet, as "too monotone" for King Charles II. It is just conceivable that a minuet consisting of one note only might pall upon any monarch, however unmusical; but it is scarcely conceivable that an experienced verse-writer, like the author of "*Nell Gwynne*," should even infer the possibility of such an absurd composition in the way of dance-music.

M. Planquette's share of "*Nell Gwynne*" is a musical pudding full of melodic plums. The rondo, "Only an orange girl" (act i.), is a composition of great merit—a thought too long, perhaps, but of well-sustained quality throughout. Two pretty quartets ("Oh! heart," and "O'er their young hearts") adorn the first act, which, however, is disfigured by a dull, conventional tenor serenade—the sort of puling song that would be only just tolerable if sung with consummate grace and tunefulness, but is quite insufferable as rendered at the Avenue. Amongst the more delightful

numbers of act ii. are Nell Gwynne's rustic rondo, "Ah ! work-a-day life's hard," and Jessamine's "Tic, tac, oh !" as well as a pretty romance, called "Troth is naught," and sung by the heroine of the piece. The *chef-d'œuvre* of act iii. is a scena, descriptive of the ups and downs of civil war ("The trumpet sounds"), a composition conclusively proving M. Planquette to be possessed of dramatic instinct as well as of tuneful inspiration. This act also contains a comic idyll *à deux* ("Happy the lot"), which is excruciatingly funny, and scored the chief success of the *première*. The choruses throughout the opera are very good indeed.

The performance of "Nell Gwynne," praiseworthy in many particulars, suffered as a whole from the disabilities common to all operatic entertainments in this country—*i.e.*, the regrettable practice of sacrificing general efficiency to the popular demand for "stars," by engaging incompetent singers and actors to fill minor parts, and the still more lamentable incapacity of so many British vocalists to produce their voices artistically or even agreeably. Miss St. John's high merit as a songstress and remarkable versatility as an actress have never been displayed to greater advantage than in the Protean part of Nell Gwynne. Miss Warwick is not always faithful to the middle of the note ; but her voice-production is excellent, and she sings with admirable taste and feeling. Miss Reynolds is a sparkling, if somewhat spasmodic, little actress, and will prove a valuable addition to our stock of pert and "fetching" *soubrettes*. As a seventeenth-century beadle, not insensible to the pleasures of the table or the passion of love, Mr. Lionel Brough was altogether inimitable. Words cannot describe his pompous geniality and humorous self-appreciation. He was ably supported in the comic business by Mr. Roberts, cleverly made-up as a typical provincial usurer—a village Shylock, duly provided with an undutiful Jessica—I should say Jessamine. Of the gentlemen cast for the two conspicuous parts of Buckingham and Rochester, the less said the better. Their performances (I use the word under protest) are calculated to awaken sorrow rather than anger. Not being able to say anything agreeable of Mr. Walsham's Falcon, I will pass over that character in silence. Mr. Wheatman does not realize my ideal of the "laughter-loving King," although he has that monarch's pet imprecation very pat. He might play the Stranger well—or Mawworm—or indeed any part demanding a settled gloom in its representative. As Charles Stuart he is a thought too lugubrious. The choruses are sung to perfection ; the orchestra, under Mr. Jacob's masterly guidance, is all that a musician could wish it to be, and the scenery, costumes, and appointments leave nothing to be desired. To be pretty, well made, and musically intelligent appears to be the rule, not the exception, amongst the singing supers at the Avenue.

WM. BEATTY-KINGSTON.



Our Play-Box.

“COMEDY AND TRAGEDY.”

An Original Drama, in One Act, by W. S. GILBERT. Produced at the Lyceum Theatre,
on Saturday, January 26, 1884.

Duc d'Orléans... ..	MR. J. H. BARNES.	De Courcelles... ..	MR. FRANCIS RAPHAEL.
D'Aulnay	MR. GEORGE ALEXANDER.	Viscomte de Mauzun	MR. NEWTON CHISNELL.
Doctor Choquart ...	MR. E. F. EDGAR.	De Broglie	MR. GILLESPIE LEWIS.
Abbé Dubois	MR. E. MARCH.	Joseph	MR. WALTER RUSSELL.
De Grancy	MR. FRANK GRIFFIN.	Pauline	MISS O'REILLY.
De la Ferté	MR. ARTHUR LEWIS.	Clarice	MISS MARY ANDERSON.

Mr. W. S. GILBERT follows the example set by his old friend, Thomas Robertson, in sketching out the framework of a proposed play as a novelette or short story before he arranges it for the use of the stage. If a scenario has to be made, it is just as well to do it in this form as any other—to publish it and be paid for it. The promise held out when “Comedy and Tragedy” was printed as a short story in a Christmas Annual, called “The Stage Door,” has not been belied. It turns out to be a capital little play, and just the thing for an actress of power and versatility. It has been said that “Comedy and Tragedy” was specially written for Miss Mary Anderson. The statement is questionable. Long before Miss Anderson arrived in this country, the idea was submitted to several of our leading actresses. The plot is simply this:—An actress of the Comédie Française, at the time of the French Regency, enamoured of her husband, who is devoted to her, is persecuted by the attentions of the Regent himself. She can only free herself from his odious flattery by a ruse. Giving out that she is weary of married life, she invites a select company to meet the Regent, and, when she has primed them with wine, she, Deborah-like, lures her persecutor on to his doom. Just when he is at the feet of Clarice the husband enters, and challenges the Regent to mortal combat. At first the challenge is indignantly refused, on the plea that the challenger is an actor; but when he tears up his engagement in the Regent’s face, there is no reason why he should not have the satisfaction of a gentleman. So the antagonists go out into the garden to fight, whilst Clarice undertakes to keep the coast clear. Her guests enter, and in order to amuse them and to distract their attention, she offers to oblige them with an improvisation. In the middle of it she hears from the garden a cry of agony—the wail of a wounded man. Her intercession that the door should be opened is taken for acting of the most brilliant kind by her guests; and it is only when the doctor sees that the grief is real and the agony true, that the appeal of Clarice is listened to. The doors are opened, and the unwounded husband stands in the doorway.

Such an opportunity for the display of her full power is given to very few actresses. All is sudden, quick, and impulsive; and, as may be imagined, the strength of Miss Mary Anderson was tested to the utmost. In our opinion, she failed to display either comedy sufficiently delicate, or tragedy adequately powerful. Her comedy was laboured; her tragedy artificial. Attacking the

subject with tremendous energy, she never lost her individuality in the illusion. It was always Miss Mary Anderson, and never Clarice. It is here, indeed, where Miss Anderson falls short of the highest expression of her art. Beautiful as she may be as Parthenia, as Pauline, as Galatea, and as Clarice, she is always Miss Anderson in different costumes. She is a very clever actress always—an extremely painstaking and useful actress; but in no performance is there a scintillation of genius, or a suggestion of sensibility. The support of Mr. J. H. Barnes and Mr. George Alexander is adequate, but not extraordinary; but it struck us, on the occasion of the first performance, that much was wanting in the stage-management in order to help the illusion.

There have been strong expressions of opinion antagonistic to the play, but we remain unconvinced by them. The trap of Clarice is coarsely likened to that of Mr. and Mrs. Manning, who murdered an exciseman, known as O'Connor, at Bermondsey, in the year 1849. There is really no similarity whatever. The Mannings simply inveigled their victim into a cellar; Mrs. Manning shot him, "just as she would shoot a cat," to use her own infamous words; and her husband, "who never liked the fellow, finished him off with a ripping chisel." The husband of Clarice, however, though he entraps the Regent, offers him fair and honourable combat. There is as much chance for the one man as the other; in fact, the odds are considerably in favour of the Regent, who is an expert swordsman. When Clarice sends out her husband to fight, she sends him to what is apparently certain death. If anyone is trapped, it is the husband; not the lover. The play is extremely effective, and it will be highly valued by expert actresses who have both the comic and tragic stops at command. It would be extremely interesting to see Mrs. Kendal as Clarice.

"CAMARALZAMAN."

A New Burlesque Fairy Drama, in a Prologue and Three Acts, by F. C. BURNAND.
Produced at the Gaiety Theatre, on Thursday, January 31, 1884.

The Shah	MR. W. ELTON.	Toko	MISS E. BROUGHTON.
Camaralzaman	MISS E. FARREN.	Badoura	MISS C. GILCHRIST.
The Sharina	MISS BALL.	The Djin Danasch ...	MR. E. TERRY.
Wun Lung	MR. T. SQUIRE.	Li Kwinki	MR. WARDE.
Mons. Le Duc d'Em-		Maimouné	MISS P. BROUGHTON.
broglio	MR. SOUTAR.	Stella	MISS M. WATSON.
Lo Slang	MISS HANDLEY.	Gemma	MISS P. WATSON.
Zee Zning	MISS ROSS.	Lucida	MISS OLIVER.

THIS is a burlesque of the familiar Gaiety pattern, on which serious criticism is wasted. It is held to be amusing by those who like such things, and shows off Mr. E. Terry, Miss Farren, and Miss Gilchrist as advantageously as the entertainment will permit. The prettiest thing in it, however, is the acting of Miss Phyllis Broughton, who reminds one of burlesque when it was not hopelessly allied to vulgarity, and taken under the dubious protection of men who, destitute of sincerity on any subject under heaven, flavour their so-called criticisms with the scent of the cigarette and the nauseous taste of the everlasting cocktail.

"PAW CLAUDIAN ; OR, THE ROMAN AWRY."

A Travestie on Messrs. WILLS and HERMAN's play, "Claudian," in One Act, by F. C. BURNAND.
Produced at Toole's Theatre, on Thursday, February 14, 1884.

Clawdian Andlives...	MR. J. L. TOOLE.	Thari-o-galus	MR. GEORGE SHELTON.
Coal-Holey Clement ...	MR. E. D. WARD.	Agazil	MR. W. BRUNTON.
Theorus... ..	MISS BELLA WALLIS.	Almi-i-da	MISS MARIE LINDEN.
Zosimus... ..	MISS KATE CARR.	Scrogginos	MR. JACKSON.
Volpas	MR. W. CHEESMAN.	Hodgos... ..	MR. TOMPKYNS.
Symachus	MISS LYDIA RACHEL.	Belos	MR. WALL.
Sesiphon	MR. H. CUSHING.	Tria	MISS MONTAGUE.
Demos	MISS WOLSELEY.	Threeta	MISS M. SIDDONS.
Alserena	MISS EMILY THORNE.	Konstabularii	MR. CARLISLE.
Little Don'tcaris ...	MASTER JONES.	Heranthera	MISS LAWISS.
Sambo	MR. C. BRUNTON.		

ONE of the best burlesques Mr. Burnand has written for many years ; a good subject capitably treated, a clever book excellently interpreted. A greater contrast between that which delights the "masher" and amuses the general public could not be afforded than this play. It is inoffensive, and bubbling over with the rich wine of good-nature. Where all play so well, it is invidious to select any one for particular praise. Mr. Toole as Clawdian is the funniest thing that the dramatic year has produced—a parody quite complete and admirable. Miss Marie Linden is even better than she was as Fedora ; and no one will wish to hear comic songs better sung than by Mr. E. D. Ward. Mr. Shelton also is a better burlesque actor than dozens who have a greater reputation. To describe such a play as this would be waste of time. It is a thing to be seen ; and once seen will be appreciated as true fun, and a welcome change after the dull stuff that is often palmed off on us as wit. Thank heaven "Paw Claudian" is not approved by the critical chappie. It is too clever for his drink-sodden brain.

"PERIL."

A Version by SAVILE ROWE and B. C. STEPHENSON of Sardou's "Nos Intimes."
Revived at the Haymarket Theatre on Saturday, February 16, 1884.

Sir George Ormond,		Percy Grafton	MR. H. EVERSFIELD.
Bart.	MR. FORBES-ROBERTSON.	Meadows	MR. PERCY VERNON.
Sir Woodbine Graf-		Kemp... ..	MR. STEWART DAWSON.
ton, K.C.S.I. ...	MR. ALFRED BISHOP.	Lady Ormond	MRS. BERNARD-BEERE.
Captain Bradford ...	MR. H. B. CONWAY.	Lucy Ormond	MISS JULIA GWYNNE.
Dr. Thornton	MR. BANCROFT.	Mrs. Crossley Beck	MRS. CANNINGE.
Mr. Crossley Beck	MR. C. BROOKFIELD.	Sophie	MISS AUGUSTA WILTON.

AFTER a somewhat transitory reign at the Haymarket Theatre, "Lords and Commons" has at last been laid upon the shelf, and in its place we are presented with an English adaptation of M. Sardou's "Nos Intimes." The present revival of "Peril" seems as likely as at any previous time to become a favourite with the public in general, whether the play be considered as a study of human nature under varied forms and aspects, or simply as a domestic drama admirably worked out to its minutest details. We have not far to seek for a reason to our assertion if we pause for a few moments to make acquaintance with the principal characters who are introduced to us in this play.

Lady Ormond, a young beautiful girl, full of high-flown sentiment and romance, has linked her life with a man whose faith and devotion, however absolute, have failed to satisfy a craving for mutual sympathy and companionship which fill his wife's heart. Fully sensible of her husband's goodness and nobility of character, the woman is still, as it were, unconquered in her fancies, which all too surely prompt her, like a heedless child, to play with fire.

Temptation comes across her path in the shape of Captain Bradford, a young man of her own age—worldly as she is innocent, but able by flattering words and winning looks to arouse his hostess' interest in a way which fosters his vanity, if it does nothing more.

Lady Ormond, unconscious of evil, allows herself to drift with the stream, not only happy in the acquisition of a new friend, but encouraged in her conduct by that of her husband who, ever mindful of his wife's wellbeing, sees no harm in her close companionship with his guest, until the voices of friends arouse suspicions, which eat into the man's heart with anguish as the idea suddenly dawns upon him that his most valued and greatest of treasures, his wife, may through the whispered words of a stranger, be unfaithful to him in thought, if not in deed.

Bewildered with grief, Sir George resolves to find out the truth for himself. Late though it be, he gives out that he is unexpectedly called away from home. There is little more to be said; only a parting look, a farewell embrace, and Lady Ormond finds herself alone in her drawing-room sorely perplexed as to the cause of her husband's hasty departure. Suddenly she is aroused from her dreams by a passing footstep. Whose can it be at this hour of night?

She turns, and finds herself in the presence of Captain Bradford. What is the meaning of his being here? It is beyond her powers of comprehension to understand. The complete innocence of the woman is entirely mystified as much by the man's look as by the impassioned words which are hurriedly poured into her ears. An awful fear takes possession of her heart: all she desires is to escape from the voice which so fearfully destroys her peace of mind.

The wife's love for her husband unconsciously quickens her capacity for stratagem. "Hush! there is a step upon the stair!" and, as the words are repeated with terrified earnestness, her lover's arms instinctively relax their hold as he slowly moves towards the open window. She, quivering with excitement, waits and waits, until, his foot upon the balcony, she turns. With one supreme effort the shutter is drawn together, and, as the heavy bar reaches its socket, the woman sinks upon the ground, prostrate with an agony of fear and terror, which is only allayed by the welcome sound of her husband's voice and the warm embrace he bestows upon her. We think it must be generally admitted how completely the interest and right comprehension of this play hinges as much upon the pure, innocent nature of the heroine, as upon the calm, dignified bearing of her husband.

The highest praise must be awarded Mrs. Bernard-Beere for the untiring earnestness of purpose and feeling which she portrays as Lady Ormond. Mrs. Beere's heart is evidently in her work, and, as ever, her great talent demands our warmest and most heartfelt admiration. But apart from all abstract admiration of her talent, it is to be regretted that this clever artist, in her manner towards Captain Bradford, rather convinces us of the skilful tactics of a woman of the world than those of an innocent and unsophisticated girl.

From a certain point of view, Lady Ormond might have been somewhat on her guard against the flattering words and tender looks of her husband's friend; but such an idea, however plausible to some minds, takes from the character that rare chance of unconscious purity which ought to be as

strongly felt in the scene where the woman rejects her lover's advances, as at any other time throughout the play.

If such is the case, our sympathies are excited in a way which would be absolutely impossible could we think that Lady Ormond had any idea of the feelings experienced towards her by Captain Bradford.

At times, notably in the first and second acts, Mrs. Bernard-Beere invests the character with an amount of earnestness which somewhat overweighs the part; but, on the other hand, this quality enables her to make the ending of the third act admirably impressive.

Nothing could be better than the look of horror which steals over the woman's face as her lover's arms cling tightly around her, nor the subsequent expression of relief which flits across her features at the chance of escape. These are points which cannot fail to be appreciated in a performance full of thought and earnest endeavour.

As Sir George Ormond, Mr. Forbes-Robertson lacks the calm dignity of voice and manner which such a part requires. This character is, perhaps, the most important one in the play. We must comprehend the man's utter want of sentiment and romance to account for Lady Ormond's dissatisfaction, whilst his nobility of character is amply displayed by the forbearance he exercises towards the would-be lover of his wife. Mr. Forbes-Robertson failed to convince us of the reality of these sentiments; and so the character of Sir George Ormond in his hands practically fell to the ground. Scarcely for an instant did we recognize his presence either as master of the house or host to his assembled guests. Physically unsuited to the part, one could not help wishing that this gentleman had been cast for that of Captain Bradford, which, in Mr. Conway's hands, proved too often a singularly lifeless and unimpressive performance. This circumstance is more to be wondered at when we take into consideration the poetical though very natural sentiments of Captain Bradford, which, given with the slightest fervour of expression, could not fail to be rightly appreciated by the most practical of audiences. Mr. Conway, however, looked the part to perfection. He was a thorough gentleman.

Mr. Bancroft has probably never been seen to greater advantage than in the part of Dr. Thornton, a true and loyal friend to the family in general. Saving for an occasional slowness of articulation, the performance is most admirable in every respect; and the smart, sententious lines awarded to the Doctor soon took the fancy of the house. The same may be said of the Sir Woodbine Grafton of Mr. Alfred Bishop—a minute and finished study. Mr. Brookfield is excellently made up as Mr. Crossley Beck; but why does this clever actor so fluctuatingly imitate the manner and voice of Mr. H. Kemble? Mrs. Cannings as Mrs. Beck is all that could be desired; and last, though not least, must we mention the Percy Grafton admirably portrayed by Mr. H. Eversfield. The by-play of this “model youth” in act i. is as true to Nature as it is original in conception.

Judging by the cordial reception which awaited the play on the first night of its present revival, “Peril” may be pretty confidently asserted to have taken a new lease of life. Possessing many faults, its characters can never be said to resemble those of lay figures. In their strong individuality and uniform consistency to Nature, they cannot fail in affording a most enjoyable evening's amusement to the theatre-loving public.

That Sardou's famous play has been adapted at all, or that it is likely to interest the general public, appears to be resented as a personal affront to them individually by several of the able writers who are condescending enough to favour us with an opinion on the object, form and literary colour of a work they have evidently never read. The fact that Sardou was listened to in 1876, and is likely to be listened to again in 1884, causes them to shed very many bitter tears. They have all got very profound views of Sardou's play without ever having taken the trouble to read it. One tells us that Caussade was a gardener, another a stockbroker, a third a bourgeois citizen, a fourth a retired country gentleman; all are agreed that it was highly improper to make him a baronet, and pretend that Sardou is misunderstood and misinterpreted in consequence. The fact of Caussade being a boor or a baronet interferes very little with the fortunes of the play. He is a good-natured, prosy, unsentimental contrast as a husband to a fervid, romantic, unstable lover who interests his wife. That is all. The fault of the play, the obvious blot on Sardou's clever idea, is its obvious insincerity. Serious situations result in false effects. The audience is tempted, as Mr. Pinero's audiences have often been tempted, to assume an instant interest and to be laughed at for their pains. The hare is the gravamen of the dramatic offence; but the play has been built on the hare (or fox) episode, and must stand or fall by it. This false effect would be patent whether Caussade was a count or a costermonger; it would be emphasized whether Lady Ormond's scene with Bradford at the close of the second act was played ill or well, exaggerated or confined within the limits of pure comedy. If some of the gentlemen who are so very learned on the subject of a play they have not taken the trouble to read, had studied Sardou instead of misrepresenting him, their well-intentioned advice might have been more valuable than it is. They would then have seen what really has been done to Sardou's play instead of surmising what has not been done. They would then see how Bradford has been turned from a vulgar, conceited coxcomb, a seducer of the old French type, into a not wholly objectionable and disgusting person; how Abdallah has disappeared from the scene, and how other alterations have been made in dialogue and sentiment to make the play possible for an English audience. It is very clever no doubt to surmise what Sardou ought to have done, and then boldly to say that he did it, but this convenient process does not inspire much confidence in contemporary criticism. One writer is sublimely dogmatic. He boldly states that in 1876 not a critic in existence was idiot enough to approve of "*Peril*" as a play, but that the public were so supremely silly as to like the play when they were told not to do so. If this were true, it might be very clever, but it labours under the disadvantage of being false; confident of the truth of this false assertion, he states—on the strength of the verdict of the first night—that the public is now so educated that they will believe the phantom critics, and distrust their personal judgment. That is to say, sitting at the first representation on a certain Saturday he knows by a certain gift of prophecy with which he is endowed, absolutely what the criticiser of the following week will think. This inspired prophet might as well have postponed his doze in order to see that Mr. Bancroft, who plays Dr. Thornton, shoots no hare or any other animal in the play, and if he had



"You flatter me."

Maud Beethoven

studied the playbill, sundry other little obvious inaccuracies might have been avoided. It is very painful no doubt to find that the public of 1876, and the American public of 1884, were impertinent enough to run counter to critical opinion, and if it should prove to be the case—as is very likely—that the Haymarket audiences of the next few weeks put up with the artificiality and false effect of Sardou for the sake of his after-brilliancy, his cleverness, and his stage craft, it is to be feared that all these critical tears will have been shed in vain, and that some of these afflicted gentlemen must make up their mind to “grin and bear it.”

“MARGERY’S LOVERS.”

An Original Comedy, in Three Acts, by J. BRANDER MATTHEWS. Produced at the Court Theatre, on Monday, February 18, 1884.

Colonel Maitland ...	MR. EDMUND MAURICE.	Mr. Grant... ..	MR. CHARLES COOTE.
Lewis Long	MR. JOHN CLAYTON.	Jules	MR. GILBERT TRENT.
Richard Blackburn...	MR. ARTHUR CECIL.	Margery Blackburn..	MRS. BEERBOHM-TREE.
Señor Lopez	MR. MACKINTOSH.	Mrs. Sara Webster...	MRS. JOHN WOOD.
Algie Fielding	MR. C. CARTWRIGHT.		

FOR the sake of bare record, it is necessary to give the cast of a very unfortunate play, whose constitution was not sufficiently robust to out-live the sorrowful astonishment of a first-night audience. The comedy had no backbone, and no acting, however good, could save it. Still, for all that, Mr. John Clayton, Mr. Arthur Cecil, Mrs. John Wood, Mrs. Beerbohm-Tree, and Mr. Cartwright, did what they could to prolong a miserable existence.



Mizpah !

[And Laban said : This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed and Mizpah ; for he said, The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another.—Gen. xxxi. 48, 49.]

WHEN we are parted—pray ! but do not weep ;
 My spirit in the air is wandering ;
 Love is an hour of life ; with death comes sleep :
 The night’s a dream ; the day awakening.
 The Lord watch over us where’er we stray,
 One from another be it night or day,
 Be this our covenant apart, alone,
 Carve thou this sign upon Love’s altar stone.
 Mizpah !

Whilst we are waiting—hope ; but do not grieve,
 There is some sunshine on the darkest day ;
 Around Love’s monument fresh garlands weave ;
 Despair not thou, my heart—but only pray !
 The Lord watch over us, twixt me and thee,
 When we are absent, if we parted be.
 Be this our covenant, by faith alone,
 Carve thou our sign upon Love’s altar stone.

Mizpah !

C. S.

February, 1884.

NEW SERIES.—VOL. III.

M

Our Omnibus=Boy.

THE moral vision of Mr. Robert Buchanan is temporarily obscured. He defends the indefensible action of helping himself to the story of Georges Ohnet for dramatic purposes on the plea that he did not know that the author of "Le Maître de Forges" wanted his own property, and was not anxious to make it a present to Mr. Robert Buchanan. He did not know it, because he did not apparently want to be enlightened to the contrary. The expenditure of twopence-halfpenny on a postage stamp for France would have cleared up any doubt on the matter, and assured Mr. Buchanan whether the reports in the Parisian papers were true or false. On the very night that "Lady Clare" was produced at the Globe Theatre it was as well known in London as it was known in Paris that the dramatic version of "Le Maître de Forges" by Ohnet was not only written but accepted and in rehearsal at the Gymnase Theatre. If there were dramatic critics present who were ignorant of the origin of "Lady Clare," and ascribed it to Belot and not to Ohnet, the fault rested with Mr. Robert Buchanan, who was bound by every principle of courtesy and good taste to declare where the play came from, and not compel the critics to ferret it out for themselves and lay a bill of indictment against the borrower. The very next morning all London knew that "Lady Clare" was not an original play. The very next morning Mr. Buchanan was challenged to say whether "Lady Clare" was or was not the story of "Le Maître de Forges," taken with or without authority but without acknowledgment. It will be for Messrs. Hare and Kendal, in England, and for Mr. Wallack, in America, to say how far they have suffered from the prior production of "Lady Clare." My own opinion is that they will not suffer in the least, because Ohnet has treated his work like a dramatist. What Ohnet thinks of Mr. Buchanan and his works will be found in *The Era*, the organ to which Mr. Robert Buchanan is in the habit of appealing when he desires to impeach the honour of his contemporaries. If I were to turn to one of the many excellent novels of Mr. Robert Buchanan and to help myself to one of his plots in order to make a play out of it, as I should have a perfect right to do according to our iniquitous law, I should consider that I had done Mr. Buchanan a great wrong, and so would he! I hold that a man's literary invention is a man's absolute property, and the borrowing does not become less shabby because it is perpetrated on a Frenchman whose dramatic work in this country has a marketable value.

Ere now pantomime in the provinces has once again finished its annual reign; the "last nights" have passed, the "principals" have partaken of their benefits, and the dying clown has, for the time being, as Grimaldi expressed it in his farewell address at Drury Lane, "jumped his last jump, filched his last oyster, and boiled his last sausage." The green baize curtain, which is still sacred in the country theatres, has fallen for the last

time this season on harlequin and his jovial companions, the good fairy has relapsed into temporary obscurity, the happy prince and the loving princess have returned to their ordinary employment in the "legitimate" drama, and the elves and sprites of the "opening" scenes have gone back to their mothers and their drudgery. The prudent manager has already determined upon the subject of his next Christmas production, engaged his company, and decided upon his chief attractions for the prospective season of merriment. In his mind's eye he has determined upon his processions, his marches, and the great spectacle that is to be the talk of the town in a few months. The musical conductor waits until later on in the year to arrange his music, but the greater part of the ensuing pantomime is sketched out and in preparation. The scenic artist is busy designing the transformation scene which is to astonish both the children and their elders next December, and some other artist is at work with designs for the new dresses. All this being so, it may seem rather late in the day to refer to the dead and dying pantomimes, but I cannot resist telling of some of the best things that I saw in Liverpool and Leeds last month.

Conveyed to the former city in four hours and a half, a rapid journey, accomplished by the aid of the excellent train-service of the London and North-Western Railway Company, I found Liverpool in its usual state of alternate sunshine and drenching rain. Having refreshed the "inner man" with that nourishment with which it is uncomfortable to dispense, I straightway repaired to the Alexandra Theatre, over which Mrs. Edward Saker now presides so ably, and there I witnessed an entire "grand comic Christmas pantomime," written by Mr. T. F. Doyle, and entitled "Jack the Giant Killer." If not very exciting, it proved a highly enjoyable entertainment. Some of the scenes were really beautiful, and Mr. John Brunton deserves great praise for his exquisite painting. The silver-armour scene was a splendid spectacle, reflecting great credit upon Mr. G. W. Harris, Mrs. Saker's ingenious stage-manager. Miss Marie Loftus being ill, her place as Jack was taken by Miss Norah Durham, a pleasing young actress, who should make a mark on the stage. She played the part capitally, and may be sincerely congratulated upon her success. Other parts were filled by the author, Mr. Doyle, Miss Fanny Marriott, Mr. James Damers, and Mr. E. S. Gofton. The music at the Alexandra Theatre is under the direction of Mr. John Ross, an accomplished musician, who always provides his hearers with charming melodies.

At the Prince of Wales Theatre, in Clayton Square, there is no room for elaborate spectacular display, so Mr. Frank Emery—who is a shrewd manager and knows his public—gives his patrons plenty of honest laughter instead. He therefore called in the assistance of Mr. Fred. J. Stimson, a great provincial favourite, who re-arranged one of the late J. F. McArdle's "books" of "Beauty and the Beast" with a fortunate result. Mr. Stimson also appeared as one of the ugly sisters, and did not, as men in women's clothes on the stage often do, make himself obtrusive. The Beauty was represented by Miss Maude Branscombe, who has greatly improved in her acting of late, and who sings charmingly. Mr. Henry Coulsone played the Beast with success, and Mr. Sydney Price was one of the best demons I have seen. But the hit of the pantomime was undoubtedly made by

Mr. E. J. Lonnen, who played a page-boy with a quaint, irresistible humour that seldom finds its way to the stage at pantomime time. His singing of a mock-serious ballad was immensely funny, and thoroughly deserved the great applause which it received. Mr. Fawcett Lomax, Mr. A. B. Tapping, and Miss Alice Burville, also assisted the fun of the piece. Miss Jennie Wilton made a bright little page; and Mdlle. Rosa and her troupe were evidently in high favour with the audience.

Seldom does the pantomime stage hold so brilliant a production as "Humpty Dumpty," as presented at the Grand Theatre, Leeds. The "book" is from the pen of Mr. J. Wilton Jones, and Mr. Wilson Barrett has evidently spared no expense in mounting the extravaganza. Some of the loveliest scenes were "the haunted forest" and "the dismal swamp," painted by Mr. Bruce Smith; "the silver city by moonlight," from the brush of Mr. Walter Hann; and the splendid transformation, "Oceana," by Mr. Louis Edouard. A very fine scene, too, was Mr. Stafford Hall's interior of the king's palace, where a very interesting heraldic procession designed by Mr. John Thornton, and a ballet, arranged by Mr. Lee Anderson, took place. The principal parts were capitally played by Mr. Alfred Hemming, Miss Retta Walton, Miss Lizzie Coote, and Miss Helena Lisle. Mr. Henry Hastings, Mr. Barrett's local stage-manager, made the most of his opportunities, and produced a splendid spectacle. What a magnificent stage this is to work with, and what a beautiful building for the audience, who can see the stage from the highest point of the gallery, or the back of the pit. When we have any new theatres to be erected in London, Mr. Watson should be brought from Leeds to build us a similar playhouse to the Grand Theatre.

Miss Amy Roselle, whose photograph appears in this number, was born in London, and first appeared upon the stage in childhood at the Theatre Royal, Exeter, acting with her brother, Master Percy Roselle. Afterwards she was engaged at the Cardiff, Swansea, and Plymouth theatres in succession; and was then engaged by the late E. A. Sothern to support him in the provinces. In 1871, she made her *début* on the London stage, at the Haymarket Theatre, as Lady Teazle; and in May of that year appeared with Mr. Sothern at the same theatre, in a comedy by H. J. Byron, entitled, "An English Gentleman; or, the Squire's Last Shilling." Having played at the Haymarket until the end of the season, Miss Roselle accepted an engagement to play with Mr. Sothern in the United States. Returning to London in 1872, in September of that year she was engaged by Mr. Chatterton to support the late Samuel Phelps and Mr. Creswick in Shakesperian parts at the Princess's Theatre. Among the characters she there undertook were Portia, Desdemona, Ophelia, and Julie de Mortemar ("Richelieu"). Subsequently she performed at the Haymarket Theatre (January 3, 1874), Eve van Brugh in W. S. Gilbert's "Charity." Saturday, January 16, 1875, first performance at the Vaudville Theatre of H. J. Byron's comedy, "Our Boys," Miss Roselle sustained the part of Mary Melrose. In 1878 she was engaged by Mr. and Mrs. Kendal to support them on



"I know no half moods,
I am love or hate!"

PYGMALION AND GALATEA.

Amy Cottle



"I don't know what you mean by your—cuckoo!"

PERIL.

Harry B. Lowrey.

tour in "Diplomacy," playing the part of Dora. In 1879, she accepted an engagement at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, and in January appeared there in a revival of "Caste," as Esther Eccles. On June 2 of that year she appeared as Gervaise, at the Adelphi Theatre, in the first production of Mr. Charles Reade's drama, "Drink." At the Court Theatre she appeared as the Princess de Bouillon to the Adrienne Lecouvreur of Madame Modjeska; and, at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, on December 18, 1880, she played Rosalie (a part which she had previously acted in the country), in "A New Trial," Mr. Coghlan's adaptation of "La Morte Civile." At the same theatre, on February 2 following, she appeared as Mrs. Blyth, in the first performance of Mr. Burnand's play, "The Colonel." She continued to act that part during the long run of the piece; and, on November 18, 1882, she played Mary Hope in "Love and Money," at the Adelphi Theatre. Her last part was that of Cynisca in "Pygmalion and Galatea," at the Lyceum Theatre, on December 8 last.

Mr. H. B. Conway was born in 1850, and educated at Rossell School and the University of Berlin. He made his first appearance on the stage at the Olympic Theatre in November, 1872, in the part of Bernard, in Dubourg's play, "Without Love." Subsequently, he sustained the part of David Copperfield in a revival of "Little Em'ly." In 1873, September 27, in a revival of "Richelieu" at the Lyceum Theatre, Mr. Conway acted the part of François. At the same theatre, during subsequent seasons, he appeared in the following parts—viz., Christian, in "The Bells;" Lord Moray, in "Charles the First;" Comte de Flamarens, in "Philip;" and as Osric, during the long run of "Hamlet." In August, 1875, he joined the company of the Haymarket Theatre, and opened there as Dick Dowlas, in a version of the younger Colman's comedy, "The Heir-at-Law." On Monday, January 17, 1876, he sustained the part of Romeo, in a revival of Shakespeare's tragedy at the same theatre. At the Haymarket Theatre and in the country, Mr. Conway has at various times acted the following parts with the late Adelaide Neilson:—Orlando, in "As You Like It;" Lucio, in "Measure for Measure;" Lord Tinsel, in "The Hunchback;" Sebastian, in "Twelfth Night," in addition to various characters in less important pieces. In 1876 he joined the company of the Royal Court Theatre, and on November 2, played there the part of Fred Meredith in a piece entitled "The Brothers." His careful acting of this character received favourable notice. In August, 1878, Mr. Conway joined the company of the Prince of Wales's Theatre for juvenile lead. He appeared there as Julian Beauclerc, in "Diplomacy;" and on Saturday, May 31, 1879, in a revival of Mr. Buckstone's comic drama, "Good for Nothing," Mr. Conway played the part of Charlie, and in Mr. Palgrave Simpson's farce, "Heads or Tails," Harold Dyecaster. On January 31, 1880, the occasion of the re-opening of the Haymarket Theatre, he acted Alfred Evelyn, in "Money," and in "School," on May 1, he acted Lord Beaufoy. At the same house he has also appeared as De Neuville, in "Plot and Passion;" Mr. Wentworth, in a "Lesson;" Angus MacAlister, in "Ours;"

Philip Eden, in "Odette;" George d'Alroy, in "Caste;" Lord Beaufoy, de Siriex, in "Fédora;" and Captain Bradford, in "Peril."

Messrs. Herman and Wills' play, "Claudian," was brought out for the first time in the provinces at the Theatre Royal, Hull, on February 4. It was received with every sign of success on the first night, when the play went better, indeed, than on the first night in London. It is admirably mounted in the country, and the manner in which the groupings and stage details are carried out, show that there has been no want of pains on the part of Mr. Charles Cathcart and Mr. Alfred Cuthbert, who are responsible for the production of the play in the country. The company, under the direction of Mr. Leonard Boyne, is an excellent one, and Mr. Wilson Barrett is fortunate in having also secured that excellent actor to sustain the titular character. Mr. Boyne fully grasps the meaning of the part, which he sustains with dignity, fervour, and pathos. He moreover looks the character, and he renders due effect to the dialogue. Miss C. Grahame makes a gentle, natural, winning representative of Almida. The Holy Clement is acted by Mr. J. Dewhurst, who not only impresses but thrills his audience by his powerful delivery of the famous curse in the prologue. Miss Maggie Hunt is excellent as Serena, and Mr. d'Esterre Guinness as Agazil, Mr. Chas. K. Chute as Theorus, Mr. W. E. Blatchley as Belos, and Mr. Richard Dalton as Alcares, all render valuable assistance to the cast. The song in the first act is charmingly given by Miss Mary Lennard, and Miss Georgina Kuhe, as Sabella, makes a successful first appearance on the professional stage.

During February Mr. Wilson Barrett's "Lights o' London" Company played "The Silver King" at Southampton and Portsmouth with much success. The hero, Wilfrid Denver, was acted by Mr. Alfred Bucklaw, and Miss Maud Milton was Nellie Denver. Mr. Tom Paulton as Daniel Jaikes, Mr. C. Fabert as Baxter, and Mr. G. R. Peach as Captain Skinner, were of good use in the play.

This is the kind of letter that an editor loves to receive. It is dated from Yankton, Dakota Territory, U.S.A., January 17, 1884, and after a few remarks complimentary to Henry Irving and his American tour, goes on as follows:—

"While my ink is flowing, allow me to compliment you upon your excellent magazine, *THE THEATRE*. It has been the source of considerable pleasure to me for a long time, and particularly so this winter, for, banished as I am by business to the wilds of the 'far northwest,' I am losing the entire theatrical season, and am compelled to subsist wholly upon the press for information and enjoyment. You can possibly imagine then with what delight I welcome, as an ardent theatre-goer, the regular monthly appearance of your Magazine. Long may it wave!

"The January number has just reached me. I shall close this uncalled-for

epistle, light a pipe, and proceed to digest the contents of said number ; with its aid I may perhaps be enabled to imagine myself in the 'orchestra front row right' of some 'temple of the drama.' I hope so, for I yearn to once again find myself on the hither side of a row of footlights.

"In the degenerate parlance of the wild west, 'it's cussed mean' that I am unable to witness Mr. Irving's performances. I doubt whether THE THEATRE even can reconcile me to the loss of them. However, the current number looks remarkably attractive, and shall have its own way with me.

"Please pardon this outburst, and accept the kindest wishes of a steady reader."

I have received the following letter from Mr. L. F. Austin :—

"In the *Standard* of February 2, there appeared a letter from Mr. George Edgar Montgomery, of New York, written to vindicate his reputation with English readers against the 'malicious and stupid' assertions that he is 'a ten cent poet,' 'the youngest and weakest' of the New York dramatic critics, and a confirmed caviller at distinguished actors. Mr. Montgomery affirms that these injurious opinions are held only by Mr. Irving's friends, and he suggests that he is the victim of an 'Irving Clique,' which pursues with relentless animosity every writer who does not lavish unqualified praise on the English tragedian.

"Any one who has carefully read the American criticisms of Mr. Irving will be amused by this fable of the 'Clique.' Never was an actor judged with more determined discrimination by the journals of a great country ; and of the result of this independence Mr. Irving has every reason to be proud. He has won his highest encomiums from critics who have been most earnest in exposing what they believe to be his errors. It is true that Mr. Montgomery stands out of this category altogether. His poems, I fear, are not widely read in this country. It is even probable that the English public knows little of his pretensions as a dramatic critic. A few specimens of his quality in this capacity may, therefore, be interesting to your readers.

"When Mr. Montgomery saw Mr. Irving for the first time, he made up his mind at once. 'He has no tragic sense and no tragic power,' was the dictum on Mathias. After this, nothing that Mr. Irving could do had the smallest effect on the inexorable Montgomery. On this side of the Atlantic the actor has a reputation for identifying himself with his best characters, for interpreting their very spirit and essence. But after seeing Mathias and Charles I., Mr. Montgomery decided that this was exactly the capacity Mr. Irving did not possess, and that he could not play Hamlet, Shylock, and Louis XI. Criticism conducted on this principle is very plain sailing. You see a great actor once or twice, and then imagine that you have got his measure. Mr. Montgomery is not the first man who has tried this superficial plan with Mr. Irving. A much abler critic, Mr. William Archer, began his studies of the actor in a similar way ; but in his latest essay he has confessed his mistake. When Mr. Montgomery has had the advantage of Mr. Archer's experience, he may regret the indiscretion of his early dogmas.

“Mr. Irving, it seems, has ‘no genuine dramatic feeling,’ no emotional sincerity, no inspiration, no enthusiasm. He cannot be a tragic actor, and he is not even a great melodramatic actor. He shows only the outside of Mathias, not the man’s spiritual nature. He never ‘feels’ the character. It is the same with Charles I. Mr. Irving never feels anything. As the Martyr King he is merely false and stilted. He has no real dramatic sympathy with noble and refined sentiments. It is only in characters ‘debased by crime, abnormal, and repulsive,’ that he acts with ‘a natural impulse.’ Yet Mr. Montgomery is inversely conscious of the difficulties of measuring Mr. Irving in this fashion. If Mathias is acted with ‘a natural impulse,’ the actor must enter into the spirit of the character. Mr. Montgomery admits that as Charles, Mr. Irving is sometimes ‘dignified and meaning;’ so it may be presumed that there is a natural impulse in this performance. Louis XI. is ‘exceedingly effective,’ but only in a mechanical sense. There is no tragic spirit in the impersonation. ‘In the character of Shylock Mr. Irving amounts to nothing at all.’ True, in the Trial scene, ‘his face and manner are full of heart-break,’ but this success is merely ‘pictorial.’ ‘Pictorial’ is a very useful word to Mr. Montgomery. It saves him the trouble, and the consequent discomfiture, of analyzing some of Mr. Irving’s greatest effects. To most people who know anything about acting, Shylock’s ‘heart-break’ is a perfect expression of the man’s soul. It is tragic in the highest sense, and it is just that spontaneous expression of ‘the truth and passion of life’ which Mr. Montgomery says is the distinctive quality of the great actor. But it is dismissed by this critic in an airy fashion as merely ‘pictorial.’ As for Lesurques and Dubosc, Mr. Montgomery does not think much of either. Dubosc reminds him of Toodles. The brutal drunkenness of the closing scene is ‘feebly shown.’ There is no sense of ‘the wild and tragic horrors which give point to the situation.’

“This is a fair summary of Mr. Montgomery’s ‘Study of Irving.’ I fancy it will astonish the actor’s most severe critics in this country nearly as much as it will astonish his friends. There is scarcely an assertion of Mr. Montgomery’s, with regard to Mr. Irving’s supposed failure as a tragedian, which all of us cannot meet with a blank contradiction from our own experience. The most amusing part of the business is that Mr. Montgomery gives himself the airs of the acknowledged mentor of the American stage. In his letter to the *Standard*, he tells us that his opinion is valued by all the eminent actors, ‘excepting, probably, Mr. Irving.’ What reason Mr. Irving has to value the judgment of this hasty and shallow oracle, I leave your readers to determine.”

I have received innumerable letters in connection with the article in the last number headed “First Nights at the Play,” and I print several specimens of the answers I have been favoured with, as showing what a great interest is taken in the subject. The most satisfactory part of the matter is that the article had scarcely appeared a few hours before the cap was fitted on the head that suited it best, and a brilliant example was given of the infallible motto *qui s’excuse s’accuse*. A weaker apology or a lamer

excuse never appeared in print. The public will, I feel assured, soon cease to be led by the nose by false guides who unblushingly confess that they have not the least sympathy with any serious stage work, and candidly own that they go to the theatre to laugh at the performers and to make personal remarks upon the audience. *Chacun a son goût.* And so I leave the matter to the good sense of those who have the interest of the stage at heart, and who are heartily sick of the abject silliness and fatuous frivolity of the "chappie" school of modern journalism, and all its intolerable vulgarity.

This letter seems to me to be of considerable importance :—

"Playgoers generally owe you their thanks for your timely remarks on 'First Nights at the Play.' That there is no really 'organized opposition' I entirely agree with you, judging from what I have seen and heard at two houses, and from certain facts which have come to my knowledge.

"I was present at the Opéra Comique on the occasion of the first performance of 'Musette,' and, in common with all right-thinking people, was intensely disgusted with the 'rowdyism' and utter want of good breeding there displayed by a certain section of the audience. I was, unfortunately for myself, standing at the back of the first circle, not many yards from the very centre of the disturbance, and consequently had a good opportunity of viewing the participators in the same. They were all young and well-dressed, and would probably style themselves—and on ordinary occasions be styled—gentlemen. They had evidently dined well, and were just in the mood for monkey-like mischief. The faces of one or two seemed familiar, and I have since learned on the best authority that they were a number of 'articled clerks' and their friends who, after a good dinner, so far forgot themselves as to publicly insult a stranger—a woman too!—*because the piece was bad.*

"Again, the disturbance at the Gaiety on the night of the first representation of 'Camaralzaman' was caused by a knot of men, some of whom, when pointed out, I recognized as members of one of the 'crack' Metropolitan Football Clubs. That they meant any real opposition I should doubt; they simply wanted to make a 'row,' a course of procedure not unpopular with boating and football men of the 'medical student' class, especially after they have won a match and dined well. Such conduct, however, causes the rest of the house, including, of course, the actors and actresses, intense annoyance and discomfort. The disturbances are not caused by the so-called 'cads,' but by those usually called 'gentlemen,' who conduct themselves as 'rowdy cads.'

"There must, in spite of what you say, be some way out of the difficulty, and the plan for managers to adopt seems to be this: If a person by rendering himself obnoxious to his neighbours, and by continued disturbance, evidently shows that he 'means noise,' let him be requested to withdraw. Should he refuse, let him remain till the end of the performance and then *give him in charge* for creating a disturbance, and let the charge be pressed to the utmost. The law will assuredly protect the manager, and a few such examples will quickly thin the ranks of the offenders, who are not, after all, so very numerous."

On the subject of "First Nights at the Play," Mr. A. Harvey writes as follows :—

"As there is a continual talk of an 'organized opposition' in the pit, will you, with your wonted kindness, allow me a little space to show how utterly untrue is the charge. First, who are the 'first-nighters' who are supposed to be banded together to destroy the chances of a new play? There are some thirty men—more or less—who like to be present at first performances, preferring to see a play before they have heard or read anything prejudicing them for or against it. They know nothing of each other, and care less; they meet only at theatre doors, and not a dozen of them know each other's names. They are theatrical enthusiasts, and if they speak, it is of the theatre; they pick up and drop scraps of theatrical news, they exchange criticisms on the latest play, and argue over Mr. Irving's merits as an actor. They are a most harmless one-idea'd set. You might stand among them for hours and hear less personal gossip and scandal than you could read in the Society journals in five minutes. Of course I am speaking of the real 'first nighters;' of the set who frequent the theatres where the more serious work is produced. Of opera-bouffe and burlesque audiences I know little, except that 'musical' people, strange to say, are generally a much rougher set. I think the strongest proof of an absence of organization among us is the experience of the critic who wrote to a paper a short time ago saying he established himself in the pit of the Savoy Theatre on the first night of 'Princess Ida,' to watch the proceedings of the organized opposition. He does not say what those proceedings were, but I fancy if we had been organized he would not have seen the rest of the play from the pit, for it was a great blow to us, after having waited patiently, under the depressing influences of the rain and the queue system, some four hours or more, to find, as we entered, the critic in possession, and about twenty people scrambling over from the stalls—a curious sight to a disinterested spectator, but a very irritating one to us, as they took up the best seats before we could get down to them. After that, according to the character we have received lately, we ought to have hissed the 'Princess Ida.' You know if we did. I believe the first-nighters are honest according to their lights, and I do not believe anything worth saving has been spoilt by them. They have a great deal of experience; they go for the love of the thing; they have few prejudices, beyond preferring good plays and acting to bad; and, if a disorderly spirit prevails occasionally, it is generally the result of the wearisome stupidity and vulgarity of the farce, or of the irritating, injudicious *claque* in the gallery and back of the pit, and can, as a rule, be hushed easily if the play is worth listening to. But continual charges produce a spirit of resentment; and if in time there should be an organized opposition in the pit, the managers will have to thank themselves and some of the critics for what, I emphatically declare, *does not now exist*."

Mr. Heneage Mandell writes as follows :—

"Having carefully read and duly considered your article on 'First Nights at the Play' in last month's THEATRE, I finally came to the conclu-

sion that 'the levity and spirit of chaff' of which you so justly complain is almost entirely due to the fact of there being *no* 'organization.'

"I have once or twice remarked to various first-nighters the desirability of establishing a club room, where we might meet, say once a week, to discuss any new production, and matters theatrical in general; and on each occasion I have been met with the reply 'that, by so doing, we should be giving managers and authors some grounds for their, at present, utterly absurd accusations against "an organized opposition."' This is simply ridiculous, for what could be easier than to admit the press, author, actors, or managers, to all discussions of the club.

"I think that the influence of a club of this nature would in itself, with proper management, be sufficient to check the rising tendency to levity and ridicule. Members of the club, by a system of voluntary fines, would be easily controlled; and by their *united* power could quickly suppress any other public nuisance that might arise.

"The difficulty of starting such a club lies in the fact that almost every first-nighter is *personally* unknown to each other; and there consequently arises a diffidence in the collection of subscriptions at the commencement. Then, again, the patrons of the pit and gallery are naturally not overburdened with superfluous cash; so that an annual subscription of ten shillings would be about the maximum that could be contemplated. Fifty members might be expected to join at the outset, increasing quickly to a hundred, as the club proved itself to be a genuine undertaking.

"But without a guarantee fund to work on, it would be impossible to complete the necessary preliminaries. And such a guarantee fund would be utterly hopeless to obtain without public recognition from such a magazine as yours. No attempt would be made to profit by the club, and all the various positions would be honorary."

On the 3rd of February, Josephine Gallmeyer, familiarly known throughout the Austrian and German Empires as "Die fescbe Pepi," died in terrible agony at her lodgings in Vienna, after a long and painful illness, which had not, however, prevented her from appearing in public within three weeks of her decease. This highly-gifted actress, songstress, and mimic, had not completed her forty-sixth year when death removed her from the scene of her countless triumphs and unequalled popularity. Having gained several fortunes by sheer hard work in the course of her theatrical career (which fully occupied thirty years of her busy and adventurous life) she lost them one after another by ill-advised speculations, connected in every case with her profession, and died in all but abject poverty, owing something over £2,000 to the money-lenders who had rendered her life miserable for nearly a decade past, and had extorted many thousands from her in the shape of extortionate interest. She struggled hard to pay all she owed, but broke down in the effort. Meanwhile, that the iron had entered into her soul, and that her misfortunes had cast a lugubrious gloom over the gayest spirit that ever abode within a human frame, is too conclusively demonstrated by the terms of her will (dated January 1, 1880), which have been made publicly known by her

executors. The entire document consists of directions with respect to the manner of her burial. It was her express desire that her body should be buried in a nameless grave, as that of a miserable pauper dying penniless and in debt. She directed that it should be wrapped in a common black shroud, the face covered with a veil, and in the right hand a little wooden cross which her mother had given to her when she was a child. Enclosed in a deal coffin, it was to be conveyed to the hospital with as little delay as possible, and thence, the following morning at six o'clock, to the pauper's plot in the cemetery. There was to be no bier, or display of the corpse or coffin; no flowers or wreaths were to be placed upon the latter, but a tiny picture of the Virgin Mary, which might be framed in fresh violets and lilies of the valley. The body was to be interred in the presence of the priest and the four bearers; no one else was to witness its sepulture. No stone or memorial of any kind was to be set up over the grave, of which she wished all trace to be lost. As it would have been materially impossible to enforce all these prohibitions, Gallmeyer's executors have frankly informed the public that they have found themselves unable to comply with the majority of them, feeling compelled to defer to popular feeling, which would not hear of Vienna's spoilt pet and cherished darling being borne unattended and unhonoured to a pauper's grave. As a matter of fact, thousands of her admirers followed her simple funeral to Matzleindorf, and hundreds of wreaths were piled upon her coffin after it had been lowered into the earth. Archdukes and princes were amongst the contributors to these floral offerings. Josephine Gallmeyer's brain, which was examined at the post-mortem inquest held to investigate the causes of her death, is of such extraordinary size and exceptional development, that it is to be preserved in the Pathological Anatomical Museum attached to the Vienna University, and has already been the subject of a lecture from Professor Kundrat. German comic opera and "Posse" have suffered heavy bereavements of late. Within three brief months they have lost Ernestine Wegner and Josephine Gallmeyer, both inimitable actresses, who leave behind them voids on the Teutonic stage that will not be readily filled up.

Mr. L. Martin Eiffe, an accomplished actor and skilled elocutionist, formerly a member of the famous Saxe-Meiningen Company, which has given so many brilliant dramatic artists to the leading theatres of the Fatherland, gave, on February 7, an extraordinary exemplification of retentive memory and subtle acquaintance with a language not his own, by reciting the play of "Hamlet" at the New Lecture Room, St. Peter's, Belsize Park. Mr. Eiffe is gifted with a sympathetic voice of fine quality, and has evidently devoted a natural intelligence of no mean order to the study of the great master whose *chef-d'œuvre* he interprets with equal force and delicacy. Like many of his countrymen, he not only appreciates but *feels* Shakspeare, with an enthusiasm and intensity that English-actors too frequently lack; and his rendering of the great tragedy was in many respects as instructive as it was interesting. Of his pronunciation of the English language, it may be said without exaggeration that it is unexceptionable, and only distinguished from that of a cultivated native elocutionist

by a dainty carefulness that is particularly agreeable to the ear. We should like to see Mr. Eiffe performing leading Shakspearian parts on the boards of a London theatre, amongst surroundings better befitting his talents than the depressing accessories and languid audiences of suburban lecture-rooms.

One of the fascinations of the Drama consists in the belief that we are looking, at the theatre, upon the impersonation of the characters in a strong play or poem, and nothing should be allowed to occur during a performance to remind us of the identity of the *drampers* with certain individuals of the name of Smith, Brown, Jones or Robinson. For this reason I think the public should disapprove emphatically the bowing and courtying of vocalists and artists when the fine execution of a song is applauded, or the object of the applause appears between the acts to receive a special boon and make an obeisance. But worse than either of these established departures from old-time practices is the presentation of a bouquet to floral *corbeille* across the orchestra and footlights *during* a representation. When this fulsome outrage upon common-sense is perpetrated, we do not pay a compliment to the artist but to the character represented. Imagine the lengths to which the abomination may be carried. Lucretia Borgia poisons an entire supper party: hand her a bouquet in commendation of the homicide by all means! Lady Macbeth confesses her crime in her somnolence: wake her up, first violin, and deliver a basket of flowers in recognition of her atrocity. Would not this be preposterous? Tributes to stage excellence should be spontaneous or they are worthless—mere stimulants to vanity. Ladies might, if they pleased, cast at the feet of a prima donna the bouquets that feeble-minded cavaliers had given them to complete their equipment for the evening, and gentlemen if they chose, might throw their white handkerchiefs drawn partially through diamond rings in a moment of ecstatic delight, but the pre-arrangement of the compliment is artificial, mechanical, utterly ridiculous and out of place. Calling the *corps dramatique*, or even individuals before the curtain when all is at an end may be tolerated, because the story or poem is played out, and Amina and Elvino have resumed their social status as Mr. and Mrs. Simkins. But even that process is hardly worthy of commendation. It inflates the recipient of the empty compliment, and creates envy and jealousy behind the scenes. No one ever called Garrick, or Mrs. Siddons, or Kemble to come out and be vociferously applauded. I do not believe they would have obeyed the call if they had been summoned. They had too much self-respect.

An old playgoer favours me with the following queries:—

“As the courteous editor of THE THEATRE comes before us ‘in a questionable shape,’ I will trespass upon him with a few inquiries, and trust to his politeness for an answer.

“Firstly,—I should like to know why the coroner’s inquest in ‘Hamlet’ came to the conclusion that Ophelia had committed *felo de se?* and why, therefore, the priest who officiated at her obsequies excuses his departure

from the ordinary treatment of suicides on the plea of 'great command' having 'o'erswayed the order' which would have placed her in 'ground unsanctified' till the 'last trumpet.' The only account transmitted to posterity relative to the poor girl's death comes from the Queen, who says (mind, it's only *hearsay* evidence, for the Queen did not witness the disaster) that she was clambering a willow, which 'grew aslant a brook,' in order to hang her coronet weeds, when an envious sliver broke, and down she fell into the weeping brook, and, being unable to extricate herself, was pulled to 'muddy death' by the weight of her saturated garments. Surely, this was not a case of self-destruction against which the Everlasting has set His canon? The verdict was a blunder, but, if such errors are committed in these enlightened days, it is no matter of surprise that that stupid conclusion should have been reached in Denmark. I have had some experience of 'crowner's quests,' and should have wondered at their decisions if I did not know that the jury and the coroner alike were first-class boobies.

"Again, like Jeremy Diddler, 'I only ask for information':—

"Why does Phœbe, in 'As You like It,' say—

'Dead shepherd, now I find thy saw of might,
'Who ever loved, that loved not at first sight?'"

It is true that Kit Marlowe wrote that last line, and he certainly died before Shakespeare published his play, on which ground commentators assert that the 'dead shepherd' referred to was Marlowe himself. But Phœbe, if she ever lived at all, walked about the Forest of Arden long before Marlowe was born, and to make her quote him would have been a fearful anachronism. My own impression is that, instead of 'dead shepherd,' Shakespeare wrote, 'deed, shepherd': 'deed,' in the midland counties of England, is the abbreviation of 'indeed,' and is in very common use among the rustics.

"And, again, I wish to be informed—

1. "Why actors invariably take a man by the wrist of his right hand before they shake the hand? Are they afraid that it will be suddenly withdrawn to avoid the meditated contact?

2. "Why actors, after opening a letter, give it a rap before perusal? Is it because the French (from whom they borrow action and ideas) invariably adopt the course to shake out the sand, which Englishmen do *not* use?

3. "Why singers, when they get an *encore*, invariably sing some air unlike the one in which they have gained applause? For what reason am I to be tortured with 'Coming Through the Rye,' because I had applauded 'Non piu mesta,' or why is 'Fra Poco' to be followed by the 'Dog's-meat Man'?

4. "Why critics and reporters speak of the 'rendition' of a rôle? Rendition, if it means anything, simply means returning a borrowed or stolen article.

5. "Why do actors say *o*-casion, when the word is spelt with the *oc*, and becomes, of course, *oc*-casion?

6. "Why actors take so little pains to acquire a smattering of French; at all events, of the pronunciation of certain familiar words? I hear 'Monsieur' pronounced *Mon-seer*, *Messire*, *Mossoo*, *Mounseer*, &c., and

"Brigand" is variously rendered *Brig-and*, *Bri-gand*, *Briggon*, &c. We go to a theatre to learn, and it would be pleasant to see inscribed on the proscenium *Ici on parle Français*.

7. "O. P. and P. S., are supposed to imply 'opposite prompter,' and 'prompter's side.' But is there ever an opposite prompter, or must the actor with a short memory invariably sidle over to 'P. S.' to get the word he lacks?"

On the 7th of February, Miss Bella Howard gave a *matinée* at the Globe Theatre, bringing out a new burlesque, "Little Carmen." The libretto, by Mr. Alfred Murray, is the usual derangement of an original piece; in no way above the average as to dialogue or scene, and the puns are most commonplace. The music, by Mr. Edward Belville, if not original, is pleasing, especially the duet between Michaela and Don José; also the fascination scene in the second act, which, by-the-by, Carmen sings to herself, and not to her lover. The burlesque, introducing a bevy of pretty young ladies to the public, was unrehearsed, but the principal characters pulled it through bravely; Mr. Edward J. Henley made much of the part of Escamillo, endowing it with genuine fun. Miss Bella Howard, the Carmen, gave a spirited rendering of the heroine; and her sister, Miss Madeline Howard, who then made her *début*, shows some promise; she has a sweet voice and she sings well. One is almost sorry that Miss Susie Vaughan should have appeared in a part like Don José; this lady is capable of something far better; she has a charming presence, and a good voice, which she knows how to use. She dances with much grace and finish, and deserved to have a rôle better fitted to her ability and true dramatic instinct.

The Paulatim A.D.S. did well in choosing Mr. Gilbert's "Tom Cobb; or, Fortune's Toy," for their invitation soirée on February 23. This amusing piece was well acted. Mr. Charles C. Homan and Miss Mary Brown seemed quite at home as the Irish father and daughter. Mr. J. H. Parry was a lively Whipple; Mr. J. Grahame Slee rather heavy as Tom Cobb. The romantic family, as represented by Mrs. Viveash, Miss Ivan Bristow, Mr. W. W. A. Elkin, and Mr. H. Weeden Cook, were perfect; the attitudes being especially good; but all acted well. Unfortunately, some of the performers, notably Mr. Grahame Slee, were not always audible; but, perhaps, this is accounted for by our being placed so far back, a great disadvantage in St. George's Hall. The evening was closed by "Our Bitterest Foe," Mr. A. T. Frankish successfully taking the part of the General.

At the latter end of January the Edinburgh Byron A.D.C. gave some performances in the Albert Hall, Princes Street. Mr. F. W. Broughton's "Withered Leaves," and Mr. Byron's "Old Soldiers," were the principal attractions. In the first piece, Mr. Russell Grahame as Tom Conyers, and Mr. R. C. H. Morison as Arthur Middleton, distinguished themselves, and

Miss Scott-Thorpe made a charming May Rivers. In "Old Soldiers," the hit of the piece was made by Mr. C. Irvine Robertson as Cassidy; the other parts being creditably sustained by Mr. Grahame, Mr. Morison, Mr. Scott-Murray, Miss Brunel, Miss Scott-Thorpe, and others.

The New York *Spirit of the Times* publishes the following interesting notes concerning Miss Fanny Davenport, the "Fédora" of America:—

"My first appearance on any stage was at the Howard Atheneum, Boston, on July 4, 1858, when my father and mother, and the whole company, sang "The Star-spangled Banner." I stood beside my mother and held the American flag, and I remember receiving the praise of the one dearest to me in all the world, for trying to wave the flag when the line "The Star-spangled Banner in triumph shall wave," was sung. I was then in my seventh year, and, being too small to move the flag alone, my father helped me. I wore a white frock, open work stockings, low slippers, and a red, white, and blue sash. Mrs. Barron, Lawrence Barrett, John McCullough, Dan Setchell, Joe Orton and others, who now hold high positions, or sleep in peace for ever, were among the company. My first appearance in a play was at the same theatre, in one of W. J. Florence's burlesques. Sothorn had just played an engagement, and I came on, dressed like his Dundreary, and did the sneeze and the hop, with a line from Our American Cousin. From the first year he took the theatre, my father put my name in the list of the company, because it pleased me and made me think that I was on the stage. I think he allowed me to appear once after the first two seasons; then I was sent to school, and did not play a part until I was thirteen years old. I should like to see the photograph you have of me when I sat in my mother's lap. I was only four years old then, and the photograph must be copied from an old daguerreotype taken in England, where I was born.' Among other things, this delightful letter settles a question which we are often asked, in regard to Miss Davenport's age. As she was seven years old in 1858, she must be thirty-two now. The prevalent mistake of supposing her to be a much older lady, is explained by the fact that her father playfully included her name in the list of his companies. She began her theatrical career by waving 'The Star-spangled Banner' in triumph, and she is waving it triumphantly still."

The Brighton pantomime, entitled "The Queen of Hearts, and the Wonderful Tarts; or, Harlequin Mother Goose and the Golden Eggs," proved a distinct success. The fables of the Queen of Hearts and of Mother Goose were ingeniously interwoven, and the plot was easily understood. This is all we can say in favour of the book; indeed, the author was probably not very proud of his work, for his name does not appear on the playbill. It may be at once conceded that the scenery and dresses were alike excellent. Mr. T. Pilbeam is a clever artist, as the transformation scene, called "A Bouquet of Living Pictures," proved. The fun of the piece was principally of the rough class, the dialogue being somewhat devoid of humour. The chief comic business was in the hands of Mr. Julian Cross and Mr. Fred

Solomon, as Squire Broadbeans and the Knave of Hearts respectively. The former had but little chance of distinguishing himself, but what he did he did well; whilst Mr. Solomon managed to impart life and "go" to every scene in which he appeared. Miss Vesta Tilley took the part of Colin, the hero, and played it brightly enough; she sang a pretty duet with Bluebelle (Miss Haidee Crofton). The Clayton Twins, as Pug and Snarl, the Squire's gamekeepers, made themselves great favourites with the audiences. Miss Emily George played Buttons excellently; her dancing was graceful, and she sang pleasingly. Mr. J. G. Laurien, as Mother Goose, was good; and Mr. Taylor looked comic as the Lord Chamberlain. Miss Annie Irish, as Nature, was the good fairy of the piece, and spoke her lines intelligently. A fan dance by the Eden Troupe, and a dance by children dressed as dominos, were both highly appreciated. Mr. J. Sweetman made a really capital clown, and the harlequinade went briskly enough, fun of the old-fashioned kind being provided. Mrs. Nye Chart, the manageress, a lady of charming taste, who is a great favourite in all theatrical circles, may be congratulated on the pantomime, the production of which she personally superintended.

"An industrious London correspondent of one of the Edinburgh newspapers" appears, like so many others of his fraternity, to have been talking a vast amount of nonsense. The following paragraph has been going the round of the papers:—

"THEATRICAL CRIMES.—The industrious London correspondent of one of the Edinburgh newspapers computes that Mr. Barry Sullivan, during the course of his dramatic career, has committed 17,000 murders, and has been killed in battle, slain in a duel, poisoned, or fatally stabbed, 9,000 times. Mr. Henry Irving's record is not quite so full of blood; but our great tragedian has taken 15,000 lives, and on 7,000 occasions has been violently done to death in the full glare of the footlights. Mrs. Bancroft has been foully betrayed or abducted 3,200 times; Mr. Henry Neville has 3,100 times been ruined in consequence of the treachery of his friends; Miss Ada Cavendish has been betrayed, deserted, or abducted 5,600 times, and is still suffering similar misfortunes; Mr. Charles Warner has 2,000 times been killed by ardent liquors, and as nearly as often perished by accidents on sea and land; Mrs. Kendal has been 2,000 times deserted or betrayed, and has besides been otherwise basely treated 1,100 times; Mr. Kendal has 900 times fallen dead suddenly; and Mr. John Clayton—to his honour be it spoken—has nobly befriended 1,800 miserable and deserted women, and has subsequently married about half of them. As for Mr. Charles Wyndham, he has been divorced from 2,800 wives, and is now in America, where he is continuing his disgraceful and heartless conduct to crowded houses."

What on earth does this all mean but a stupid catchpenny joke! In what play may I ask is Mr. Henry Irving "done to death in the full glare of the footlights?" The only actor or actress I ever saw "done to death on the stage" was Mrs. Rousby, who was roasted in "Joan of Arc." Mr. Irving has been roasted by his critics, but never by any dramatist. In what play that ever was written has Mrs. Bancroft been "foully betrayed or

abducted?" For the last quarter of a century, to my own knowledge, she has been acting bright characters, merry companions, genial friends, and chaffy parts generally. I never knew before that she was a melodramatic actress, or had anything to do with abduction. She is a comedy actress. In what play has Mr. Kendal ever "fallen dead suddenly?" I thought that he was a comedian, not a tragic actor. But perhaps I am wrong, and the statistical correspondent is right. If Mr. John Clayton has been occupying his life in "befriending miserable and deserted women," he must have had an extraordinary career, for I don't think I have often seen him act that he had not been very badly treated by the women who should most have respected him. No large-hearted man has been more constantly deserted and ill-treated by the fair sex on the stage. And in what play ever written was Mr. Charles Wyndham ever divorced? "The Great Divorce Case" turns upon an attempt by a lady to obtain a divorce through the agency of Mr. Wyndham, who is a barrister. This admirable actor is the standing example of the butterfly husband who capers about, but is never under any circumstances divorced. The lively Edinburgh correspondent must have been drawing on his imagination for facts and figures as well. His facts are worthless, and his figures are absolutely fictitious.

At St. George's Hall, on January 31, a complimentary benefit was given to Miss Pattie Bell by members of several amateur dramatic clubs with which she has been connected in the present and past seasons. "Naval Engagements" took place between Mr. Walter Barnard, Mr. E. D. Maddick, Mr. Ellis Pride, Mr. P. Murphy, Mrs. Lennox Browne, and Miss Amy Beresford. The first part of the engagement was brisk, and Mr. E. D. Maddick and Mr. Walter Barnard exchanged broadsides with much spirit and excellent effect. Mr. Maddick's acting was especially easy and natural. The ladies were both charming; but all were good, and the performance would have been all one could wish for, had the memory of the performers lasted until the end of the play. But why did the curtain come down in the middle? "A Sheep in Wolf's Clothing" proved very successful, in the hands of Miss Pattie Bell. The making or marring of such a play lies almost entirely with the lady, and Miss Bell came off with honours. Mr. Arthur Ayers, as Jasper Carew, was rather inclined to rant at first, but after the letter scene—charmingly rendered by both—he toned down and did well. They were supported by Miss Bessie Walters, Miss Say Morton, Miss Louie Price, Mr. Walter Bramall, Mr. Frank May, Mr. Francis Graham, Mr. Harry Vernon, Mr. George Swift, and Mr. W. R. Sterling, whose Colonel Kirke was painfully heavy. "Woodcock's Little Game" was a mistake altogether—that is, as far as the gentlemen were concerned—for Miss Pattie Bell and Miss Lizzie Henderson did all they could to enliven a very dull performance. A farce of this kind requires being rattled through and not dragged indefinitely. The pause between the two acts was wearisome and inexplicable; and but for Miss Pattie Bell's presence, one could have wished this last item omitted from the programme, but her sprightly Mrs. Larkings went far to make one forget the other deficiencies.

The third of the series of recitals given at St. George's Hall by Mr. John L. Child took place on the 29th of January. The first part of the programme contained "King Robert of Sicily," "Pickwick" (chap. xix.), "The Four Idiot Brothers," and "The Good News from Ghent." This last was given in a very spirited manner. Mr. Child was amusing in "Pickwick," and gave a decided imitation of the late Mr. Compton in one of the voices. In the other pieces, which are of a more serious character, Mr. Child is apt to be sententious, rather reminding one of the delivery from the pulpit, but some parts are given with very good effect. The second part was a selection from "Macbeth." Here again Mr. Child suffered from a tendency to monotony; and we must here repeat what we said some time ago about another reciter. The change of voice for Lady Macbeth is a mistake, for it enfeebles the reading of the character. As Mr. Child warmed up to his work, he forgot the assumption of the feminine voice, and the scene gained much in dramatic power. Notably, the scene after the murder of Duncan was excellent, and showed much force and feeling. Mr. Child is seen at his best in comic pieces. His recital of "How Mr. Sniggles went to a Public Dinner," by E. F. Turner, was simply perfect, and called forth enthusiastic applause. Mr. Child has talent, and his manner is simple and gentlemanly, but if he would strive to throw off his tendency to monotony in serious pieces, he would gain a stronger hold on the attention of his audience. Locke's music to Macbeth was performed by an efficient choir under the direction of Mr. George Calkin. The *ensemble* was very good, and the solo of the soprano, a pretty young lady with a flute-like voice, received a well-deserved *encore*.

Art and charity go hand in hand. Artists and artistes always lead the way in acts of kindness to the poor and suffering. Mrs. Adams-Acton, the charming authoress (Jeanie Hering) and wife of the eminent sculptor, has this winter organized an admirable Society, "The Sunnyside Bee." The lady members of this charitable association meet every Thursday at Sunnyside, Longford Place, N.W., the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Adams-Acton, and work for several hours; the result of all this work is to be sold at a bazaar later on in the season, and the proceeds given to Mrs. Gladstone's Convalescent Home at Woodford. The Home is free to all, so members of all creeds and opinions have joined this Society, to work together in the true spirit of charity. During these weekly meetings the members are entertained with music, reading and recitations by amateurs and professionals. On the 7th of February, a special *matinée* took place. Mrs. Gladstone, who has given her kind support to "The Sunnyside Bee," visited the Society, and became personally acquainted with the workers. The work already achieved had been brought out for her inspection, and the show was very satisfactory. The afternoon was a complete success; and especially interesting from an artistic point of view. Art and music united in "Go, sweet Rose," a charming song composed by Miss Machell, and well interpreted by the talented young painter, her brother. Miss Browning's pianoforte playing showed power and brilliancy; and Mrs. Davidson's splendid contralto voice seemed to find its way to every heart.

Mrs. Theodore Wright, one of the best amateur reciters of the day, charmed all, as usual, by her sympathetic rendering of a little poem appropriate to the occasion, and Mr. Powles was most successful in his humorous narration of a Yankee story. These were the amateurs. The artistes were Mrs. Anderson and Mr. Brandon Thomas. The lady has a pure and powerful soprano voice, wonderfully sweet and fresh, a voice well cultivated. After an Italian air sung with much taste and finish, Mrs. Gladstone specially asked her for an English song, which was equally well rendered. Mrs. Anderson is an acquisition to the musical profession. Mr. Brandon Thomas gave three recitations and an eccentric "serio-comique" composed by himself. To say Mr. Brandon Thomas is an admirable reciter, is to repeat what every one knows, but we must praise him especially for his natural unaffected delivery. In the American and Lancashire stories, his wonderful *entrain* carried the audience with him, and the simple pathos of "Little Bet," a touching poem written by him, and published in one of our back numbers, moved many to tears. "The Sunnyside Bee," is organizing under high patronage, some amateur theatricals for the same charity, and Mr. Brandon Thomas has kindly consented to give his services for this good work.

The Owl Dramatic Society gave their twenty-first performance at St. George's Hall on February 16. I was rather surprised by the announcement that this was in aid of the Society's funds; it appears that up to the present time I have been labouring under the false belief that these societies never took money except for charities: charity begins at home, it appears. To take money for themselves seems to me an infringement on the rights of the theatrical profession. "Heart's Delight," preceded by "Orange Blossoms," were the pieces under representation. One of the best delineations of character was the Carker of Mr. A. W. Hughes, the varied expression of his face shows a careful study of Dickens; his acting was excellent throughout, for of course he is not answerable for the one blot on this play. Charles Dickens's works were never intended for the stage, and Mr. Andrew Halliday had a difficult task in stringing together scenes interesting in themselves, but which did not make a play; but the one unpardonable fault is the death of Carker; this suicide is utterly inconsistent with the character of the man, Dickens killed him by an accident, and Dickens knew what he was about. Mr. Sidney Barrett was a good Dombey, slightly exaggerated. Mr. F. Crauford and Mr. Arthur Hanson were also good representatives of Walter Guy and Mr. Toots; I should recommend a little more earnestness to the latter. Mr. A. H. Davenport was admirably made up as Jack Bunsby, and Mr. W. M. Colling and Master Sidney Bedford made all they could of their small parts. If Mr. Frank Hole, as Cap'en Cuttle, had put a little more cheeriness in the beginning of the play, I should have nothing but praise to give him; in the last act, his scenes with Florence were given with much heartiness and true feeling; Miss Louisa Peach coming in for her share of sincere congratulation. Miss Helen Palgrave showed to advantage as Edith Dombey; she is fortunate in possessing a personality which suits the part, and her acting was dramatic

and powerful, especially in her scenes with Carker. The other performers were Mr. George Wright, Mr. Ralph Vincent, Mr. R. V. Hughes, Mr. E. G. Froom, Miss Kate Seymour, Miss Rose Bouverie, and Miss Emmie Marshall. It is not my habit to criticize the behaviour of the audience, but to see a gentleman (?) in the stalls, and in the presence of ladies, keep his hat on for a quarter of an hour or more, betrays a want of manners that should not pass unnoticed.

Mr. John L. Child, in his fourth Recital, on the 19th of February, scored a deserved and greater success than before. The monotony complained of above was only apparent in "The Burial March of Dundee;" these long solemn pieces do not suit Mr. Child, who loses much of his power when he cannot join action to speaking. "The Death of Little Dombey" was given with touching simplicity, and "The Raven" was rendered in a finished and artistic manner. "I want to fly," a silly comic piece, owes its success to Mr. Child's interpretation, and "The Glove and the Lions" was given in a spirited manner. After some chorus singing, Mr. Child and Mr. James Fernandez gave a performance (in costume) of the principal scenes between Othello and Iago in the third act. Mr. Fernandez's Iago reminds one forcibly of Mr. John Ryder in the same character. Mr. Fernandez speaks his lines admirably, but he is not subtle enough for Iago; his rendering savours too much of bluntness and honesty. We must congratulate Mr. Child on his Othello, a performance full of passion and fire.

Mr. Edwin Drew took his first complimentary benefit, for three years, at St. James's Hall, on the 18th of February. The evening was a success, and the attendance good. Limited space prevents our mentioning more than the names of all the performers. Mr. Edwin Drew appeared in a scene from "The School for Scandal," Mr. W. A. Eaton recited "The Fireman's Wedding," of which he is the author, in a natural manner; Professor Plumtree was very good in "The Vagabonds,"; Mr. John L. Child was well suited with "How they brought the good news," and Mrs. Aylmer Gowing was excellent in "The Coastguardsman," the last item being "Shamus O'Brien," recited by Mr. Charles Du Val. The other performers were Miss Glamoye, Miss Edith Lisle, Mr. Hinton Grove, Mr. Hope Meriscord, Miss Adele Faulkner, Miss Anita Austin, Miss Alice Kean, and Mr. Mayhew.

Mr. Lennox Browne merits the thanks of all vocalists and actors for the lecture which he delivered at the Society for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts, on Valentine's Day, on "Science and Singing." While he does not urge singers to study physiology if they have no taste that way, he rightly insists on the necessity of their being taught on sound physiological principles. He took for his text the remarks of Herbert Spencer, to the effect that, while science will not make an artist, nevertheless innate faculty, to be fully developed, must be aided by organized knowledge; and he carried his audience entirely with him in his enforcement of the same philosopher's dictum that "only when genius is married to science can the highest results be produced." But he rendered a further service by

pointing out that the scientific man should be looked to as a safe guide against the dangers of accepting quack remedies on the self-recommendation of the proprietors or the testimonials of the scientifically unqualified. His careful analysis of the claims of "artificial Italian air" to improve the voice, could not fail to convince all who heard him that professional jealousy had no part in influencing him in his unfavourable opinion; and though some might think that too much pains were taken to expose the worthlessness of the proposition, the scheme had been advocated in such high-sounding terms, and had gained such an amount of quasi-scientific support, that only by serious criticism could the ridiculous claims of its inventor (!) be effectually exposed.

On February 20, the 19th Middlesex (Bloomsbury) Rifles, gave their fifth dramatic performance at their headquarters, Chenies Street, Bedford Square, where they have a theatre of their own. The hall is very large; the grey brick walls relieved by a dado of red bricks, and decorated with trophies of arms and flags, were simply effective; and the elegant frame of the proscenium showed with good effect on this background. The scenery painted by Privates Bewick and Sayer was very good. During the *entr'act* the Caledonian Orchestral Band played selections. The first piece, "The Spitalfields' Weaver," was excellent. I have always thought it a pity that the character of Simmons should be usually attired in such an impossible dress; let the get-up be absurd by all means, but such as would be worn in the present day; however, this has nothing to do with Sergeant Perry, who was most amusing. Private G. W. Barter acted the part of Brown with an intensity of feeling seldom found in amateurs. Lieutenant C. W. Howard was a good Darville; but might I suggest that if in real life a man had thrown a torn letter in his face, he would hardly have remained so cool. Sergeant H. Sillis and Private Sayer were the servants, and Miss Ella Stirling, Adele. All did well, and the play went off without a hitch. "The Lancers" followed; and here again praise must take the upper hand of criticism. Paymaster-Sergeant Hall, as the colonel, gave a dignified bearing to the character, justifying his last words: "If you cannot love me, Madame, at least you can respect me." By-the-way, I did not quite understand why the lady was called alternately, Madame and Mademoiselle. Sergeant Ball, as the Sergeant-Major Moustache, was simply perfect. Assistant Sergeant-Major Rorke as Blanquet, acted extremely well; unfortunately, he did not look silly enough. Lieutenant C. C. H. Millar showed to advantage as Eugene; he was simple and gentlemanly. Sergeant Murcott did not understand the part of Victor de Courcy. I have not seen him before, so cannot say how he would be in a different line, but this rôle does not suit him; he spoilt his scenes in the last act by persistently forgetting that he was wounded in the arm. Mrs. W. S. Hall was a good Madame Pomponne; she missed one bit of business, but one could hardly expect an English amateur to think of it; in a Frenchwoman, who had been a *vivandière*, old habit would have been too strong for her, and she could not have spoken to the colonel without saluting. Miss Ella Stirling is pretty and interesting; she was well suited with the part of Estelle Duvernay; she is a charming actress, and only

wants to be a little more emotional. Miss Fanny Willoughby, who undertook the part of the colonel's sister, is an accomplished actress, perfect in every detail, and most natural. Lieutenant C. W. Howard, Private Cornelissen, Private Sayer, and Miss Ada Hall, were also in the cast. I can sincerely record this performance as a genuine success.

Suffering, hungry childhood—what is there to appeal more strongly to one's feelings? It seems fit that "The Romany A.D.C." should devote its services to these poor little waifs. The proceeds of the club's second performance this season, on the 21st of February, was to be handed over to "The Destitute Children's Dinner Society." As St. George's Hall was crowded on the occasion, it may, therefore, be surmised that the performance was as complete a success, from a charitable point of view, as it was from an histrionic one. The one-act drama, by Mr. Joseph J. Dilley, "Auld Acquaintance," gave Mr. C. W. Annesley Trollope, an opportunity of being seen at his best; the suppressed love and tenderness of the husband were admirably portrayed. Miss Florence Wade gave a good reading of the wife's character. Mr. H. P. Birch was an excellent doctor, and Mr. Mercer-Adam treated one to an amusing bit of character acting. Miss Annie Woodzell, Mr. A. A. Hadow, and Mr. Percy Read, undertook the smaller parts. Mr. Gilbert's three-act comedy, "An Old Score," was hardly as favourable to Miss Florence Wade (Ethel Barrington), and showed Miss Annie Woodzell (Mary Waters) to better advantage. Miss Borrodail (Mrs. Pike) had little to do, but did that little well; and Mr. H. Brett (Manasseh), and Mr. J. A. Bolster (Flatters), made the most of their small parts. Mr. C. S. Arkoll was the representative of Harold Calthorpe, Mr. J. Bathurst that of the Colonel, and a better exponent of the part could not be found. To my mind, the most finished acting in the comedy was that of M. C. L. Bathurst, in the difficult part of James Casby.

The Editor of this Magazine, and many more who are honestly interested in the stage and the welfare of the drama, have lost a valuable friend and a wise councillor in the late Admiral Glyn, who from the outset took the warmest interest in the fortunes of this periodical. Of his frank and genial nature, his sound common-sense, his loyalty and chivalry, and his manly determination to stand by those who were unjustly and cruelly treated, it would not be becoming here to speak. He suffered no personal inconvenience to stand between him and what he considered his duty to society or his fellow-men. One of the last acts of the good Admiral was to write a long letter to the Editor of this Magazine commenting fully on an article headed "First Nights at the Play," which he sincerely approved, and urging the necessity to resist by every means, however invidious and disagreeable it might be, the tendency to degrade and ridicule, and to bespatter with personalities and impertinences, the public performance of stage plays. There was no more vigorous opponent of that strange feature of our age of realism that delights in misrepresenting honest actions, and behaving with levity to innocent women, than the kindly gentleman who has founded a fund for the relief of necessitous cases in the dramatic profession, and has passed away beloved and respected by his fellow-men.

Confiteor.

A MOMENT may come to a man, and save
Eternally ;
A green yew-tree, and a little grave,
And a memory.

Heart throbbing quick, as the swift days sweep
Past like a ghost,
Long days, sad days, since you fell asleep,
Little one lost.

Can you hear me, little one, sleeping fast
Under the yew ?
I have missed you since the Death-Angel past
Betwixt us two.

Years since, I carried you robed in white,
In sad spring hour,
And hid you here from the warm sunlight—
Poor little flower !

I may not roll back the sealing-stone,
And see you, dear,
But let me whisper you here alone—
No one can hear.

Why did you leave me ? I needed aid,
Aid of child-grace,
For the evil things would have been afraid,
Of your sweet face.

For a whole life's wrong I would make redress
For your loved sake,
I have sinned a sin ;—let heart confess,
Or heart will break.

I kneel by the dead child's grave, and vow
A sacred word ;
And through the silence that falls, I know
My vow is heard.

FRÈRE SAUVAGE.

THE THEATRE.



Rossi on Hamlet.

BY WILLIAM BEATTY-KINGSTON.

I.

IT is with the express permission of their gifted author, the eminent Italian tragedian, Ernesto Rossi, that I here produce in translation a few extracts from his careful, ingenious, and loving essay upon the "Play and Character of Hamlet," recently published by him in Italy at my request and, I may say, exhortation. This paper will be followed by a second on the same subject; possibly even by a third.

It is erroneous to assert that the works of Shakespeare are not "playable." Accustomed as we are now-a-days to the artificial, true art is apt to surprise us. Pallid photography is substituted for the picture painted by a master hand. Shakespeare wrote his works absolutely for the stage and for the general public; his pieces were first produced in popular theatres, in the presence of audiences mainly composed of working-people, who brought their meals with them to the theatre. Later on, when rumours had reached the upper classes of the powerful emotions awakened in the proletariat by these plays, and of the clamorous applause they invariably elicited, "society" became curious to make the new dramatic author's acquaintance. Bacon and the Earl of Essex paid homage to him, and treated him with marked deference.

A supremely skilled and exact anatomiser of the human heart was Shakespeare. He knew where to lay his finger on the wound inflicted by passion; with merciless surgery he probed the hurt, and, when he had reached and extracted its cause, held it up to the sufferer's gaze saying, "Look! this is thine ill—these are thy vices, thy passions!" Those who reproach Shakespeare with impenetrability, or even obscurity, are profoundly mistaken.

Shakespeare could and did make himself intelligible to all men—even to the most uncultivated—possessing hearts and brains susceptible to the influence of the passions. *Poëta nascitur*. He was a poet in his youth, when scarcely conscious of his poetical force and creative genius; and always dealt in art, never in science or theory. Analyzing his works, and searching them for idealism, when we imagine that we have discovered it in some broad field of romanticism, suddenly he puts before us a man exactly resembling ourselves—a mixture of good and evil. Shakespeare was an abhorrer of classicism, not by conviction or strength of will, but by the instinct of genius. Every one of his works illustrates a variety of a passion, and differs from every other; for, although it may be said that the passions are all of one family, they are not only unlike one another, but individually susceptible of various developments, dependent upon diversity of characters, of epochs, of social ranks, of climates, and many other circumstances. Othello's love does not resemble that of Romeo; Macbeth's ambition differs essentially from that of Richard III.

Great geniuses are Nature's favourites; they see everything at a glance, and know by intuition what men in general can only learn with painful industry. A mind like that of Shakespeare derives inspiration from everything presented to its notice. Let us say that Shakespeare happened to read some little tale of average interest. At once he widened its basis of plot and broadened its field of action; its characters assumed gigantic proportions; its passions were vigorously forced into mutual contention; the story was amplified; a trifling skirmish grew into a mighty war; the burning of a haystack into the destruction of a city; and the whole construction invariably culminated into a logical catastrophe.

Shakespeare's genius, which had spiritually visited every nook and corner of the earth, and read the secrets hidden in all men's hearts, resolved to combine all the elements it had collected together in its innumerable flights into one entity—to blend in one human presentment traits of character without number—and then, breathing life into it, to say to it: "Go forth and speak; in every man you meet you will find a mirror reflecting your own image; address mankind at large, which will hear the echo of your voice resounding throughout its very being." This, his supreme creation, was "Hamlet."

Hamlet exhibits the physical and moral proportions of each and every other human being—he is universal. The more fitfully—by strange discrepancies of ideas and passions, of resolves and inactivities—he seems to swerve from fidelity to the human model, the more closely, in reality, does he cleave to it, revealing himself as the fac-simile of typical man, Oriental as well as Occidental. We all, more or less forcibly according to our respective natures, feel what Hamlet felt. Whosoever owns an intellect and a conscience, and knows how to temper impulse by reflection, study, and education, is in himself a part of that seemingly fantastic, but really truthful human presentment, the unfortunate Prince of Denmark. Hamlet is the voice of every man's conscience, expressing dissatisfaction with the first promptings of mere intellect. We see our own souls reflected in his, as in a glass, and are stricken with amazement when we hear, issuing from his lips, phrases that have passed, inchoate or incomplete, through our minds a thousand times, only to be dismissed therefrom and forgotten, like dreams of no particular moment. Hamlet represents the struggle of intellectual force with physical force; the former is stronger than the latter, which is therefore doomed to succumb. Had Hamlet possessed the muscles of Hercules, his intellect would have overcome them. But he never fully displayed his physical force, always tempering and restraining it by that of his intellect. Unable to arrive at any fixed conclusion, it was his fate to victimize those around him as well as himself.

Hamlet is a king's son, sprung from the loins of an honest and valiant monarch, the conqueror of Fortinbras, King of Norway. He has inherited his father's virtues. Being also heir to the Danish throne, he desires to become worthy of occupying it, to which end he fills his mind with instruction and steeps his soul in morality. Hamlet is upright, cultured, and generous; idle notions do not suggest themselves to his intellect; vulgar passions do not agitate his heart. The study of philosophy, to which he has devoted himself whilst at the University of Wittenberg, has laid strong hold upon his brain. He is a seeker of reasons; would fain set up as a judge of men and passions; studies and analyzes himself, and experiences irritation and self-contempt whenever he discovers dissimilarities between his own nature and that of his fellow-men. In a word, Hamlet is a thinker.

Not exempt from the common lot, he loves, and is loved in return. The object of his passion is Ophelia, a pure maiden, upon whom he urges it with great eagerness and force :

“Doubt thou the stars are fire,
Doubt that the sun doth move,
Doubt truth to be a liar,
But never doubt I love !”

How came Hamlet to fall short of these assurances? Nothing less than a great catastrophe could possibly uproot Ophelia from his heart. That catastrophe befel him. For Hamlet, the stars ceased to burn, the sun stood still, and truth became a lie ; for what could seem true to him if his mother's virtue was not so ? That being a falsehood, everything else appeared untrue to Hamlet.

Sad tidings compel him to interrupt his studies. The King, his father, is dead. “What did my father die of?” he asks. “A serpent bit him in his orchard whilst he was taking his afternoon siesta.” Hamlet's eye, on hearing this, turns inquiringly towards the faces of his mother and uncle. In them he sees that which disturbs and alarms him ; he begins to doubt ; his faith—in them at least—is shaken. Scarcely two months elapse from the day of his father's terrible death, when the Danish Court puts off its mourning, and summons to itself, from all parts of the kingdom, the great nobles, captains, and State officials, announcing to them that the deceased king's brother is about to espouse the widowed Queen, and ascend the throne of Denmark. Hamlet's doubts gain strength ; when his uncle calls him “son,” he replies, “A little more than kin, and less than kind.” He alone appears in sable attire upon the occasion of these indecent espousals, alike in protest and reproach. He asks the Royal permission to quit his country ; but the fratricide wishes to keep the Heir-Apparent to the throne within his own range of vision ; and Hamlet's mother induces him to give up his travelling projects.

“Oh ! that this too, too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew !
Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter !”

This phrase, pronounced by Hamlet early in the play, indicates one of his leading characteristics, which we find fully developed later on. He hates life, and regards it as not worth keeping at the cost of a meanness.

“How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world !
Fie on’t ! oh, fie
. . . . Frailty, thy name is woman !”

Is this an accusation or an excuse ? Perhaps the one and the other ; it should, at any rate, be powerfully emphasized by the actor as a phrase psychologically connected with the verses, “Doubt that the stars are fire,” &c., addressed to Ophelia. It is this “frailty” which Hamlet detects in his own mother, and hence attributes to the whole female sex, that explains his repudiation of all his engagements to the object of his affections.

Did Gertrude love her first husband ? Did she love her son ? Gertrude strongly resembles Agamemnon’s wife, the mother of Orestes and Electra, though lacking Clytemnestra’s courage and determination as far as the actual commission of crime is concerned. To her, however, a man addicted to orgies and excesses could not fail to prove more congenial and attractive than one in whose character the moral qualities were prevalent—one devoted to arms, and to the prosperity of his kingdom and subjects. Being what she is, it cannot surprise us to see Gertrude consent too prematurely to celebrate her second marriage. But I do not in the least believe her to have been an accomplice in Claudio’s fratricide, as certain Shakespearian commentators have assumed. Had that been the case, she could not have said to her son (act iii. scene 4), “Thou turn’st mine eyes into my very soul ; and there I see such black and grainèd spots as will not leave their tinct ;” a sentence which plainly infers that theretofore she had not looked in her own heart for the sin which, as far as she was concerned, had been unwittingly committed. Gertrude has taken no active part in the crime ; she is only her second husband’s accomplice so far that she has never taken the trouble to inquire into the real circumstances of his brother’s death : she has become an adulteress through common sensuality Claudius, a man steeped in every sort of vice and forlorn of those qualities that sometimes transform a libertine into a hero, has never really felt but one passion, that of ambition. Brother to a king, he coveted the latter’s sceptre and stuck at no turpitude in order to obtain it. Claudius, although dominated by the same passion that ruled Macbeth and Richard III., was not a complete tyrant ; his actions were vile and base, his expedients petty ; he never rose to the high level usually attained by tyrant-heroes. He was a vulgar

tyrant; Richard of Gloucester was a sublime one—a hero. Political objects moved him so deeply that he became a sceptic, a hypocrite, a murderer, the “terror of England.” But what other title than that of hero can we bestow upon the prince, who, when he hears that Richmond is landed in his realm, brandishes his sword, mounts his horse and dies fighting hard, like a true warrior? Of Claudius, on the contrary, Shakespeare has made a low, cowardly tyrant, who, seeing the counterfeit presentment of his own crime performed by the players, has not the force of character to contain himself or even to yield up the crown he has usurped, but—like the majority of commonplace malefactors—finds fault with Nature and with the Deity for not endowing him with the capacity of repentance. Claudius’ monologue (act iii.) is cognate to Hamlet’s soliloquy “To be or not to be.” Each, in its way, is a just reflex of human thoughts anent the human conscience—good and evil thoughts, respectively—neither the one nor the other results in immediate action; but both rightly appraise the infirmities of mankind.

Such a minister as Polonius was well suited to such a king as Claudius. In this personage the author has drawn an exact copy, a faithful reproduction of the typical courtier—an article of furniture in Royal palaces—who is always the last to perceive what is going on under his very nose, foretells events after they have happened, and gives himself the airs of a prophet, although he is not even a smart Anabaptist. He knows and sees all that goes on; but he neither knows, nor wishes to know, how King Hamlet died, nor does he in the least understand the sufferings of the afflicted prince. He loves his daughter merely because she is his daughter; he respects Hamlet because the latter is of the Blood Royal, but neither loves nor hates him; he makes no attempt to penetrate or study the heart of either Ophelia or Hamlet, but is content, like a seemly courtier, to *ko-too* to the prince, and to tell his daughter that flirting with the Heir to the Throne is not a pastime to be indulged in with impunity by one of her condition. Nothing is superfluous in a work of Shakespeare, and this character (Polonius) which, to some, may at first sight appear insignificant or redundant, is really essential to the local colour, epoch, and action of the play, in which last it becomes gradually involved. Besides, are we sojourning here in the desert of Modern Classicism, or on the fertile plains of Human Romanticism? I

say Modern Classicism advisedly—that of Corneille, Racine, and Alfieri ; a very different thing from the antique Greek Classicism of Sophocles, Æschylus, and Euripides. These latter were creators—the former, imitators ; the ancients gave us giants of flesh and blood—the moderns, pretty marble statues or bronze statuettes. Shall we say to the painter who reproduces on his canvas a scene of human life—a battle, for instance, a shipwreck, a flowery hill-side, “What is the use of that drumstick, lying on the ground—of that cask, that plank, floating on the surface of the tossing billows—of that violet, blossoming amongst the weeds ?” No. Let us admire the picture, study its composition, and examine its smallest details with a view to ascertaining whether or not they harmonize with its main conception. In Shakespeare’s dramatic works they invariably do so.

ERNESTO ROSSI.



A French Stage Nursery.

BY EVELYN JERROLD.

PILGRIMS in Paris, with return tickets in their pockets, know not half the shrines where they might wisely kneel. That Martyr’s street, notably, which leads to the classic Mons Martyrorum, Montmartre, has lodged half a hundred historic personages, and its neighbours have been equally fortunate, possessing Thiers, Daubigny, Rochefort, Manet—to string names together haphazard—by turns or together. The curious in matters theatrical I would invite to a not particularly inviting wine-shop in an almost forbidding street, the Rue de la Tour d’Auvergne, at the summit of the martyr’s road already named. The merchant of wines has set up his pewter counter on the site of a minute but memorable theatre, officially “l’Ecole Lyrique,” but familiarly, proverbially, Théâtre de la Tour d’Auvergne. The old street gets its name from a certain Louise Emilie la Tour d’Auvergne, Abbess of Montmartre three centuries ago, and not from the warrior officially baptized the First Grenadier of France. It is a desolate thoroughfare, apparently compact of convents and forlorn eating-houses ; but illustrious residents have rendered its dreary length interesting. Here lived Victor Hugo ; here

Châteaubriand came to visit Béranger ; here, too, lived Revolutionists as well as poets ; General Berton beheaded by the Restoration ; Godefroy Cavaignac died at No. 23, and Ranc lay in hiding at Sarcey's house, just opposite the Théâtre des Jeunes Artistes, or Lyric School.

What a multitude of young ambitions it must have sheltered, this little theatre ! Hopes higher than Hugo's or Béranger's realizations. Over the portal you can yet see the be-ribboned thyrse and the mask of comedy. The corridor at the side has yet vague airs of a stage entrance, and the court behind has the weird, naked look of a dismantled proscenium. For the nostrils of imagination the very counter smells of the "boards." For the Tour d'Auvergne Theatre was, in a way, the cradle of much French dramatic art—the first chapter of many a Roman Comique. It had two physiognomies, the modest little hall announced by one poor lamp at the door. It was the local Theatre Royal, or National, or Imperial, as the Revolution might be, on the one hand—the resort of the porters, the little shopkeepers of the quarter, who had, not seldom, a daughter or a niece among the players. On the other hand, it found splendid patrons among the Jockey Club men, the golden and electro-plated youth and middle age of the Boulevards, when the stage tarantula seized some fashionable Phryne and drove her to air her diamonds and her dulness behind the footlights, even though there should be only half a dozen of them. Those were the halcyon days of the Tour d'Auvergne, days—nights, when the red Duc de Grammont-Caderousse—he who killed Dillon—came to applaud Mdlle. Juliette Beau, whose complexion, compared with the ducal colour, was as "moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine." The duke led on a legion of elegant idlers, and in a fortnight the *divette* had rendered intolerably popular the mawkish music and witless words of "Ay-Chiquita." Grammont-Caderousse died consumptive two or three years after, but Mdlle. Beau is the legitimate possessor of an authentic coronet, and an enchanted villa perched high above Naples.

The little theatre was inaugurated some forty years ago. The name of the original manager escapes me. Many were the directors, *du reste*, who dictated to awkward squads from the managerial chair, which ought to have been a stool in the managerial room, which might have been a cupboard. Two or

three were famous : Ricourt, the eccentric professor of elocution, whom it was my privilege to study now and then in his ramshackle academy across the Seine ; Achille Ricourt, the friend of Janin, Ponsard, Bocage ; Briault and Talbot, who like most of their successors and predecessors, used the little hall as a school-room for their classes, a laboratory for their experiments. As for the players who learnt to walk the boards—on these bandbox lids—their names are Saint Germain, Paul Deshayes, Dieudonné, Talien, Aimée Desclée, Mdle. Delaporte, Mdle. Agar, which are better names than legion. Among the directors, all more or less various types of *impresarii*, perhaps the most singular was Boudeville, an old Odéon actor, turned professor of declamation and reader to the old Baron Rothschild. In the morning he read the newspapers to the millionaire, declaiming the Bourse share list like Hamlet's soliloquy, and at night raging, fuming, thundering over the pitiful attempts of his pupil to render his dramatic ideal. His collaborations with the Baron James, in the Rue Lafitte, or at Boulogne, was worth two hundred francs a month ; it gave the old banker two hours' start of his rival financiers, and the eight pounds brought in, perhaps, as a rule, ten thousand per centum. The financier's reader was an honest Quixote of art, a lineal descendant of Rameau's nephew, without the forbear's vices. He telegraphed to Sardou on his deathbed, begging his dramatic idol to follow his hearse. He lived with wits and bankers—the baron, the actor Leroux, the President Desmaze ; and he died poor, as he had lived, the owner of a little cottage and a cabbage garden at Nogent, the 'Invalides' of decayed comedians. He had no great faith in his pupils. Now and then, disdainfully as it were, he launched a trembling neophyte on the boards of the Tour d'Auvergne—Anna Deslions, for instance, at once stammering and crying, or Isabella the flower-seller, who had the courage of her incompetence ; and he would shrug his shoulders openly, and strike his lean chest : "They haven't got *that* here, and they think they can act ! Ah, *misère* !" Ricourt had the same contempt for the debutants he drilled, only he expressed it more emphatically, with epileptic gestures and round racy adjectives.

The memoirs of the Ecole Lyrique, if they could be written, would contain the names of several young authors, as well as those of many budding players. M. Victorien Joncières, the eminent critic and composer, produced an operetta at the Montmartre

Hall ; and here Jean Richepin, the author of "Nana Sahib," and Pierre Elzéar, a writer less favourably known, together played in a joint piece, "l'Etoile." Richepin is a somewhat original personage, and M. Elzéar may, perhaps, not consider himself absolutely common-placé, but they are to be numbered among the least extraordinary first appearances at the Ecole Lyrique. One day a waiter of the Maison Dorée left the boulevard for the Montmartre quarter, his professional pumps for the dramatic cothurnus. He played Roswein in Octave Feuillet's "Dalila"—about as ambitious a part as a stage-struck waiter could well select. That night the Rue de la Tour d'Auvergne was invaded by the topmost crust of the Maison Dorée's habitual patrons. The poor beginner was screamed at: "Waiter, send the wine list;" "Two dozen of Ostend, Roswein," were among the cleverest epigrams coined on the occasion. The catastrophe did not deter another waiter from the same august establishment from giving, after having taken orders, and strutting a very brief and inglorious hour as Chabonais in the "Chevaliers du Pince-Nez"—a part popularized at the time by a young actor of talent, who has since subsided into "the husband of Madame Judic." Never were louder hisses heard in the Lyric School, which possessed acoustic qualities peculiarly favourable to the sibilant reverberation. It is already ridiculous, in the eyes of a prejudiced public, to be a waiter. This waiter was also a comic hunchback, known to all Paris as "Bosco"—a pseudonym which was made to rhyme with "fiasco" in half the profoundly funny journals of the day. All the Tour d'Auvergne first-nights and first-appearances were not grotesque failures such as this. There Céline Chaumont, perhaps the brightest, sharpest—in no slang sense—actress of modern France, had her first part in the "Premières Armes de Richelieu." She played Déjazet's rôle, and the veteran called her "My Monkey." The definition, intended as a compliment, was more than deserved. Another night, famous in the annals of the amateurs' stage, was that which saw the auditorium invaded by a battalion of gendarmes. There was no political meeting, only a gendarme's daughter delivering her first tirade in public.

Every French theatre has its twin café—le café du théâtre—utterly independent commercially, but as much an adjunct of the greater house of entertainment as its very green-room. The Tour d'Auvergne was a Lilliputian Procopé. Its frequenters

were like curious reductions of the ordinary customers of the Café de Suède. Meagre girls in their waterproofs and draggled skirts—the coming Dorines and Iphigenias of “next door”—modest but hopeful ; beardless believers in their destiny ; little, old men of twenty, who would recite at a sign the *Menteur* story, the tirade of Harpagon, or Figaro’s soliloquy ; all of them plunged in those actor’s day-dreams of nocturnal apotheoses, bitter to many of them as very nightmares. It harboured curious types, like all places where players congregate. There were the local critics discussing the last infinitesimal star, the unknown *nébulæ* solemnly, like the dilettante who remembers Macready, sir. There were poor provincial agents seeking some embryonic glory cheap ; there was, above all, an infatuated amateur *figurant*, a dumb player, whose dream it was to appear now and then as a missing “witness,” a “guest,” one of a gentlemanly crowd, at a moment’s notice. His frock coat was always well brushed ; sometimes he would exhibit a dress coat. But he made his conditions before playing. He must wear the ribbon of the Legion. That clause, in the four hours’ treaty accepted, he was happy for the rest of the evening, his button-hole flowered with a bit of red, his ambition innocently satisfied. Another odd “guest” or “temoin” was the journalist Nazet, a reporter of repute, who might have been a journalist of renown. He used to take a mute part in the ball scene of “l’Honneur de la Maison.” In the midst of the scene a sudden fancy seized him to—speak ; and he spoke English. The action ceased, then had an interval. The audience was delighted, and when Nazet left, and there was no English interlude in the classic comedy, stalls and boxes were inclined to demand the return of their money ; the play had been truncated, there was no Englishman in it. Perhaps the simpletons who begged for that Briton were not much more foolish than the polished patriots who are now applauding the heroic character of Nana Sahib.



“Thou Bid'st Me Live.”

THOU bid'st me live ; to cherish deep
The memory of days foregone ;
With sad remembrances to weep
Their pleasures flown.

To muse upon that blissful dream
Whose swift but joy-illumined flight
Passed o'er my boyhood like a beam
Of holy light.

I cannot live, nor longer bear
The sting thy faithless love hath left ;
Nor sigh for beauty, false as fair,
Of love bereft.

For 'tis a wound no balm may heal,
A tear no hand may wipe away,
A darkness which can never feel
Returning day.

Yes ! I have wooed thee, but in vain ;
And so I ask, I wish to die,
And 'neath the cold, still earth would fain
Forgotten lie.

Thou bid'st me live ! I love too well ;
No more my resolution chide.
Death shall ring out the nuptial bell,
And be my bride.

MARIE BANCROFT.



A Tragedy-Queen.

SINCE the pre-historic ages, when the Queen of Hearts busied herself with the making of those tarts which the knave so basely stole away from her, feminine royalty, deceived and outraged, has been a favourite theme with the poets. "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," even in the grave. Kitty and Molly and all the little names we love rest quietly in their forgotten places ; year by year Katharine of Aragon rises from her stately tomb in Peterborough Cathedral in answer to the summons—"Katharine, Queen of England, come into Court !" Year by year Mary of Scots puts on her poor head again (that head, which is so curiously like Madame Modjeska's), and re-enacts the last great scene of her mysterious life. The ghost of good Queen Bess may haunt the Abbey ; but we have seen her in bodily shape and form, as she came to the pleasure-grounds of Fotheringay, in her green habit, with her hunting-whip in her hand. The lovely spirit of Elizabeth of Valois may hover round the gardens of Aranjuez ; but we have met her there, walking with poor Don Carlos. What do we care about genuine portraits of Henrietta Maria—we, who have all but dined with her Majesty at Hampton Court. We may forget our Grecian mythology, and remain in profound ignorance of the annals of Egypt before (and since) the Empire. But Clytemnestra lives. Alcestis comes again from the land of shadows. Calantha breaks our hearts with her own. We bow before the rule of Cleopatra, as in the days of old. "La reine est morte : vive la reine !"

In the rear of the brilliant procession that rises before us as we proceed, far behind Eleanor, Constance, Anne of Bohemia, Margaret—not far in front of the laureate's Bloody Mary, and that unfortunate royal lady whom Alphonse Daudet has thought fit to dramatize for the benefit of the Parisian public—there comes a very different figure—thin, ugly, old, withered, and unattractive ; but still a woman, and every inch a queen. Ideal she is not—real she is not in the literal sense of the word, seeing that we have not the very faintest clue to her actual existence—but for all that she is endowed with a reality so absolute and startling

during the brief moments we are allowed to see her, that she moves among her royal sisters with as sure a step as if it had seemed good to her author, Mr. Browning, to give a "local habitation and a name," and perhaps a more conclusive date than "Bagni di Lucca, 1853." As it is, he has left all these to our imagination, and we may fill up the blanks pretty much as we please, in accordance with the various indications given us of her history and surroundings. These also are extremely slight and pre-Elizabethan, consisting mainly of a garden, a picture-gallery, and a good deal of sculpture. The title leaves us quite in the dark. It all happened "in a balcony," says Robert Browning, writer of plays: "why on earth should you want to know when or where? Given the balcony, you can surely do the rest for yourselves." Why, indeed? At first it seems a twice-told tale, for what does "in a balcony" suggest, but a new edition of *Romeo and Juliet* come back to life again, and re-christened Norbert and Constance? There they stand, as long ago in Verona, so now in the capital of No Man's Land; the garden lies before them in the calm of evening; the moon shines with the same glory as of old, only somehow the lover—sign of a more democratic age—has climbed up into the balcony instead of humbly remaining downstairs. There is the same breathing silence, and radiant darkness, and sense of suppressed excitement. The same—the same—and not the same; alas! the same thing never happens twice, except in fairy-tales. Directly they open their mouths to speak the voices are in another key. Norbert is cast in a very different mould to *Romeo*; Constance has something—not much—of *Juliet* in her, tempered by a resolute ambition, a native genius for intrigue, which are completely foreign to sweet *Miss Capulet*. She could not have borne exile to Mantua, or anywhere else. Norbert must be not only her lord, but all the world's; and if this cannot be, she would have him choose the world without hesitation. And she is older and more practical than *Juliet*, fully aware of her subordinate position and dependence on the Queen's bounty, accustomed to look after herself and her own interests. There is but one flaw in her judgment; she knows the world just too well to be conscious of certain things which are in it, and not of it. With all his guileless inexperience of women, Norbert knows the Queen better than she does, though he judges from without, she from within.

The play opens with his entreaty that she will let him go straight to her cousin, the Queen, and ask her hand as the reward of the great political triumph—

“The junction of two crowns on her sole head,”

achieved by his labours during the past year. Oh, dear no! says Constance. Much too simple and stupid a proceeding. You judge the Queen as if she were an ordinary woman, and took your professions of loyalty and so forth, for just what they are worth. Not in the least! All her life long she has lived in a world of make-believes, make-believe love, loyalty, friends, parents, husband, till now she could not understand the true thing, if she saw it. It would only disconcert and annoy her to find that all the service done professedly for her was really done from love for me. At worst she will be angry, refuse, and ruin us; at best, she will consent, pay her debt, and rid herself of us both together. I know her well:—

“We women hate a debt as men a gift. . . .
Does she love me, I ask you? not a whit;
Yet thinking that her justice was engaged
To help a kinswoman, she took me up—
Did more on that bare ground than other loves
Would do on greater argument. For me,
I have no equivalent of such cold kind
To pay her with, but love alone to give
If I give anything. I give her love:
I feel I ought to help her, and I will.”

(Note the little touch of superiority which warm-blooded youth cannot resist over the middle-aged woman, who “coldly paid its warmest debt,” if once you “let her think, her justice is engaged To take the shape of tenderness.”) She has no tenderness, no heart left, she could not understand love, she can and does understand from her own nature the strict, stern sense of duty and justice, which would lead to self-abnegation on your part. Tell her how you have worked and toiled for her—how, “since none love Queens directly, none dares that,” you will take me instead:—

“Say, I’m so near I seem a piece of her—
Ask for me that way (oh, you understand)—
You’d find the same gift yielded with a grace,
Which, if you make the least show to extort. . . .
—You’ll see! and when you have ruined both of us,
Dissertate on the Queen’s ingratitude!”

Unconvinced, but unable to withstand her sophistry, Norbert yields in an evil hour for both of them. There is a radical

difference between the two from the very first. She has enjoyed to the full

“A year of this compression’s ecstasy.”

She has no wish to give up the “minute’s meeting in the corridor”—

“The sudden sleights, strange secrecies,
Complots inscrutable, deep telegraphs,
Long-planned chance-meetings, hazards of a look,”

and live like her “five hundred happy friends” in humdrum marriage. She likes “embracing under death’s spread-hand,”

“So wickedly, so wildly, and so well.”

Not so Norbert. To him waiting is torture. What does he care for his own career—the Queen—or the Queen’s feelings? He wants Constance, and Constance only. For her he has toiled and laboured all this time:—

“Is the Queen just? just—generous or no?”

He cannot wait longer, he must speak, *must* claim her. In some of the most beautiful words that Browning ever wrote, he tells her so:—

“Permit this, Constance! Love has been so long
Subdued in me, eating me through and through,
That now ’tis all of me, and must have way.
Think of my work, that chaos of intrigues,
Those hopes and fears, surprises and delays,
That long endeavour, earnest, patient, slow,
Trembling at last to its assured result—
Then think of this revulsion! I resume
Life after death (it is no less than life
After such long, unlovely, labouring days),
And liberate to beauty life’s great need
O’ the beautiful, which, while it prompted work,
Suppressed itself erewhile. This eve’s the time,
This eve intense with yon first trembling star
We seem to pant and reach; scarce aught between
The earth that rises and the heaven that bends;
All Nature self-abandoned, every tree
Flung as it will, pursuing its own thoughts
And fixed so, every flower and every weed,
No pride, no shame, no victory, no defeat;
All under God, each measured by itself.
These statues round us stand abrupt, distinct,
The strong in strength, the weak in weakness fixed,
The Muse for ever wedded to her lyre,
The Nymph to her fawn, the Silence to her rose:
See God’s approval on his universe!
Let us do so—aspire to live as these
In harmony with truth, ourselves being true!
Take the first way, and let the second come!
My first is to possess myself of you;

The music sets the march-step—forward, then !
 And there's the Queen I go to claim you of,
 The world to witness, wonder and applaud.
 Our flower of life breaks open. No delay !"

If she will not have him ask for her directly, he will ask indirectly, as she wishes, but ask for her he must and will. Stage-direction : "He breaks from her ; she remains. Dance-music from within."

Some time ago there was a rumour current in dramatic circles that the play—(it is no less a play because too short for subdivision into acts and scenes)—had been accepted, and that we were to have the rare excitement of seeing Mrs. Kendal in a part fully worthy of her great powers. She would have known how to invest Constance with all the wilful charm of a nature that seems to obey while it commands ; how to reconcile her calculated schemes for Norbert with her utter recklessness of self ; her frank avowals with that maiden dignity the very denial of which gauges the depth of her affection. We can imagine, too, with what exquisite by-play of force and gesture she would have filled up the significant black line before the next stage-direction—"Enter the Queen."

Enter the Queen, pale, trembling, terrified, and overwhelmed, with a joy almost too strong for her to bear, wildly imploring Constance to tell her whether it is true whether such happiness is really hers :—

"*Queen.* Is it so? Is it true or false? One word?

Con. True.

Queen. Mercifullest mother, thanks to thee !"

Slowly, slowly the truth dawns on the bewildered girl. Her plan has succeeded, succeeded fatally. The Queen believing Norbert to be really in love with her, avows her love for him. In words of indescribable pathos, she tells for the first and last time the story of her loneliness, her empty life, her dumb anguish of self-repression :—

"Oh, to live with a thousand beating hearts
 Around you, swift eyes, serviceable hands,
 Professing they've no care but for your cause,
 Thought but to help you, love but for yourself,
 And you the marble statue all the time
 They praise and point at as preferred to life,
 Yet leave for the first breathing woman's cheek,
 First dancer's, gipsy's or street baladine's !
 Why, how I have ground my teeth to hear men's speech
 Stifled for fear it should alarm my ear ;

Their gait subdued, lest step should startle me ;
 Their eyes declined, such queendom to respect ;
 Their hands alert, such treasure to preserve ;
 While not a man of them broke rank and spake,
 Or caught my hand and pressed it like a hand !
 There have been moments, if the sentinel
 Lowering his halbert to salute the Queen,
 Had flung it brutally and clasped my knees,
 I would have stooped and kissed him with my soul."

She had taken Constance to her heart "when the last chance of love seemed dead ;" she had watched her growing intimacy with Norbert, and approved it with a strange pang.

"It seemed so true,
 So right, so beautiful, so like you both,
 That all this work should have been done by him,
 Not for the vulgar hope of recompense,
 But that at last—suppose, some night like this—
 Borne on to claim his due reward of me,
 He might say, 'Give her hand and pay me so.'
 And I (O Constance, you shall love me now!),
 I thought, surmounting all the bitterness,
 'And he shall have it. I will make her blest,
 My flower of youth, my woman's self that was,
 My happiest woman's self that might have been !
 These two shall have their joy and leave me here.'
 Yes—yes !"

Poor Constance !

"And the word was on my lips
 When he burst in upon me. I looked to hear
 A mere calm statement of his just desire
 For payment of his labour. When—O heaven !
 How can I tell you? Cloud was on my eyes
 And thunder in my ears at that first word
 Which told 'twas love of me—of me—did all :
 He loved me—from the first step to the last,
 Loved me!"

Desperately, Constance hazards a conjecture ; what if the Queen were mistaken ? No use ; and yet she catches alarm at once :—

"Love is begun : this much is come to pass :
 The rest is easy. Constance, I am yours !
 I will learn, I will place my life on you,
 But teach me how to keep what I have won !
 Am I so old ? This hair was early grey ;
 But joy ere now has brought hair brown again ;*
 And joy will bring the cheek's red back I feel.
 I could sing once too ; that was in my youth.
 Still, when men paint me, they declare me . . . yes,
 Beautiful—for the last French painter did !
 I know they flatter somewhat ; you are frank—

* Where her majesty learned this curious bit of natural history, I cannot undertake to state.

I trust you. How I loved you from the first !
 Some queens would hardly seek a cousin out,
 And set her by their side to take the eye :
 I must have felt that good would come from you.
 I am not generous—like him—like you !
 But he is not your lover after all :
 It was not you he looked at."

But even in despite of "the last French painter," the Queen remembers that she is not beautiful. Constance's statement, that she was ignorant of the world, had some foundation in fact. She flies to her books' and poems for stories of unequal marriages (though even here, alas ! it is always young ladies who fall in love with old gentlemen, instead of *vice versa*). With timid but increasing ardour she pleads her own cause, meeting Constance's faint suggestion that it cannot be, because she is married already, though only in name, with an outburst of such magnificent, scornful, exultant energy, that fresh objections are impossible. She

"Will drive these difficulties far and fast
 As yonder mists curdling before the moon. . . .
 Dissolve that hateful marriage, and be his,
 His own in the eyes alike of God and man."

Poor Queen !

So at last she goes away, warning Constance against over-great caution where the deepest interests of life are concerned, imploring her sympathy, her help, as Helen might of Hermia, promising her also a "noble love :"—

"Constance, I leave you. Just a minute since
 I felt as I must die or be alone,
 Breathing my soul into an ear like yours :
 Now I would face the world with my new life,
 With my new crown. I'll walk around the rooms,
 And then come back and tell you how it feels.
 How soon a smile of God can change the world !
 How we are made for happiness—how work
 Grows play, adversity a winning fight !
 True I have lost so many years : what then ?
 Many remain : God has been very good.
 You stay here ! 'Tis as different from dreams,
 From the mind's cold calm estimate of bliss,
 As these stone statues from the flesh and blood,
 The comfort thou hast caused mankind, God's moon !"

There are few things in modern drama to equal this scene between the two women, in its contrast of broken, overflowing joy, with dumb, bewildered agony. Who claims the largest share of our sympathy in this strange combat, the self-deceiving, or the self-deceived, the real Queen or the unreal ? Truly it was no

common hand which drew the portrait of the latter, hiding her sensitive shame of ugliness and unattractiveness, her passionate admiration of beauty, youth, and generosity, under so thick a veil of reserve, that even those whom she loved best never suspected it. Natures like this have no room for mere likes and dislikes ; they can only love or hate, and she was full of love for Constance. How much Constance's love for her was worth we feel in a moment ; with all her powers of expression, hers was a colder disposition—probably, in her heart of hearts, she loved no one, except Norbert. But the Queen grows more and more affectionate in proportion as she warms to her own happiness ; even the touch of momentary suspicion—

“ You have not been mistaking words or looks ? ”

is followed by the tenderest appeal. Alone she had sorrowed, but she will not rejoice alone.

Again Constance is left standing by herself upon the balcony, and again the echoes of the dance-music from within reach her unheeded. Were our play ever to be acted at the Lyceum, we could not doubt that at this point a very large moon and several stars of the first magnitude would shift sympathetically round the corner. A chill night-breeze, ushering in the most ethereal of fogs, would make the ladies shiver in the stalls, and we should catch sight of various couples in the distance, embracing, to heighten the contrast, like those officiously affectionate lovers in Rossetti's picture of “ The Blessed Damozel.” There follows a difficult scene for Constance and her lover, into which we will not enter, partly because it has nothing to do with the Queen, partly because we might only, like the celebrated Dr. Parker, “ make the argument darker, which was dark enough without.” At a most awkward moment, the Queen enters. Constance tries to entrap Norbert into marrying the Queen, and actually prevails on her to make him a formal confession of her love, which she does in words so cold and stately that only one who knew what had gone before could feel the heart-beats underneath them. For a long time Norbert thinks it is all a jest to try the sincerity of his love for Constance. Quietly, but proudly, he repels it. What is a crown to him, compared with her ? Vainly she interposes ; he sees at length that it is earnest with them both :—

“Ha, what’s this?

You two glare each at each like panthers now.
 Constance, the world fades ; only you stand there !
 You did not, in to-night’s wild whirl of things,
 Sell me—your soul of souls, for any price ?
 No—no—’tis easy to believe in you !
 Was it your love’s mad trial to o’ertop
 Mine by this vain self-sacrifice ? well, still—
 Though I should curse, I love you. I am love
 And cannot change : love’s self is at your feet !”

Nothing more. No one screams—no one faints—no one falls into hysterics. Not even a flash of summer lightning disturbs the stillness of the night. Only, “The Queen goes out.” Constance and Norbert know each other at last ; what care they now for the broken music, the sudden glare of torches, the heavy, measured tread of the guard surrounding them ? I pity not the lovers on their way to execution and the seventh heaven, but the poor little, old, lonely, ugly Queen of Nowhere and of Nothing.



Madge.

A WOMAN with a tender haunting voice,
 And brave sweet eyes in which the sunny flash
 Will sparkle ere the laughter curve her lips,
 And peep out slyly through the drooping lash.
 A woman on whose head one seems to see
 A circlet, woven by the love and tears
 And laughter she has won from us, whose lives
 Her presence brightens through the happiest years.
 The hands—a trick of hers—are oft outstretched,
 So many cling to them, and strong men rise
 The better from her touch, while children’s smiles
 Will break in laughter as they meet her eyes.—
 So true a woman, that were all her art,
 And bright sweet coquetry, and winning ways,
 To pass from memory in the time to come,
 There still were left enough for grateful praise,
 In that bystanding in the fiercest glare,
 As one whose whole brave life is one of good
 And tender deeds, she helps our girls to grow
 More noble through her perfect Womanhood.

M. E. W.

Bismuth and Vermilion.

By GODFREY TURNER.

THE first pantomime-clown I *never* saw was Joseph Grimaldi, of whom my recollections are peculiarly vivid. His last appearance, for what was called, poor soul! his Benefit, was in a chair, from which he bowed his grateful acknowledgments without rising to his legs, these being swathed in flannel. He sang two or three of his old Sadler's Wells songs, and finally broke down in the attempt to recall his past years of hard, honest drolling, and the proofs of public good-will which that long service had gained him. Many are the clowns of whom, after having seen them again and again, my memory is faint, compared with that which endures with me, and will, I think, continue to endure, concerning "inimitable Joe." Those about me when I was a child, those nearest in the accustomed power to enchain a childish curiosity and attention, were persons who had indeed seen this antic in the flesh. As near as we know what we ourselves mean by the pantomime of nineteenth-century harlequinade, Grimaldi must be accounted the first of its clowns—the first, that is to say, in chronology as well as in distinct character and merit. It was most observable of him that he had a rich comic voice; and the next thing remarked about him was that he seldom spoke. His vocabulary was of monosyllables compact, and these came forth two or three at a time at most. Suppose, for instance, he had just robbed a confectioner. Slyly disclosing a peep at the spoils, he would say, "Nice cake!" and then, a minute or two afterwards, might follow the seemingly good-natured invitation, or artful endeavour to entrap the looker-on into participation of the larceny, "Have some?" Introducing a huge bird, with whom he was presently to sing a duet, it was quite a long speech for him to say, "It's a cassowary." These and similar phrases, sparingly introduced, were the exceptional effects, the painter's high-lights, touched-in with body-colour. Grimaldi, the true artist, whose originality only strengthened his respect for the traditional laws of his craft, knew very well that pantomime is essentially the rhetoric of dumb-show. Speech had no part therein; and had it

been introduced by a man of mediocre talent, rather than of transcendent genius, the daring innovator would have been hissed. It was a ground of critical objection to the clowns of my boyhood that they were not so reticent as Grimaldi, whose utterances, few and far between, never failed to provoke laughter, and whose habitual silence heightened the effect of his songs. Like Delpini, the posture-master, he may have had a prudent motive in opening, however narrowly, the flood-gates of speech on the stage. Two or three words sufficed in those days to promote a pantomimist into the grade of an actor, thus entitling him to participation in the rights, privileges, and benefits of the Theatrical Fund. Silence, you will observe, is not invariably golden.

"Hot Codlins," which was exclusively a clown's song for many years, was first sung by Grimaldi, at Sadler's Wells, in 1819, when he played clown in a new pantomime, called "The Talking Bird." The composer was Whittaker, whose name should be more honoured than it is for his hearty and genuine compositions, brimful as they are of true melodious character. I remember the old gentleman personally as a dry, humorous dogmatist, who never hesitated to avow his likings and antipathies, delivering his opinion in a firm, crusty voice, and very few words, always opposed to the general view. Some important person was once advocating a constant, regular use of the bath as the best preservative of health, and a murmur of conventional assent broke from the approving company, when Whittaker abruptly growled forth in a decisive tone which completely settled the question, "I *hate* bathing." Many tunes that one hears and receives as veritable relics of the past, so quaintly old are they in popular character, are Whittaker's; and, Englishman as he was, he could on occasion give the Scotch, Welsh, or Irish flavour to his original melodies. There is, for instance, the intensely Hibernian air, "Paddy Carey," which



was composed by him; and I should say that his genius was of this peculiarly creative and flexible nature that it always

suited the occasion and the demand. A delightful ballad-tune, remarkable for enforced repetitions of the most significant and emphatic words, is Whittaker's "Thine am I." It is one of those few compositions in which the music may be read to find the full sense and feeling. Again, was ever tune more exactly fitted to the Grimaldian humour, as it has been imperfectly handed down to our times, than this piece of melodious tomfoolery, "Hot Codlins"? For half a century it was almost impossible for any pantomime-clown to escape the gallery's imperative call for this song and its fellow-ditty, "Tippitywitchet." Tricks of tumbling must have been very excellent tricks indeed to commute the stringent obligation upon every descendant of "Old Joe" to give one if not both of these time-honoured songs; and it is only in the past two decades that we have ceased to hear them. I remember, at an impoverished and degraded period of old Sadler's Wells, before the Phelps and Greenwood epoch, a dull and dingy Christmas pantomime was being played to a sleepy house. The oppressiveness of the clown grew at last unendurable, and the subdued cries for "Hot Codlins" gathered in volume till they reached a perfect storm. The unhappy droll, advancing to the footlights, looked up angrily at the gods and said, "I am not a singing clown." To this remonstrance a baker, leaning with his bare arms over the rail, retorted contemptuously, "No, nor you can't tumble neither." There was, as they say in reports of the Divorce Court "practically no defence;" and after one more indignant glance at the gallery, this songless and stiff-jointed mime resumed his melancholy business of the harlequinade by scraping, with the edge of a frying-pan, a limp, poorly-stuffed property fitch of bacon, and testing the flavour on his protruded tongue.

A bad, or at all events worse than indifferent disciple of Grimaldi at the old Wells was one Jefferini, with the irritating peculiarity of a throat like a giraffe's. He had, too, a most unpleasant voice, and his demerits generally conjoined in exciting my boyish prejudice and ire against his ridiculously Italianized name. The traditions of Grimaldi have not been fortunate in their followers. Few, indeed, have been the clowns in my time worthy to be deemed adequate supporters of the old school. Among the funniest of the Grimaldi type and fashion, I suppose, should be named Paul Herring, Tom Matthews, and Harry Boleno. Let me not, however, forget the "amateur-clown,"

Joseph Robins, who took eventually to professional life, coming out at the Lyceum towards the last of the 'fifties, as Simmons, in "The Spitalfields' Weaver." He was but a dull, heavy comedian; but he was born for bismuth and vermillion. His clownish gagging, of which he never gave us over-doses, was magnificent; and he was the first to introduce that piece of jocularly, a pretended surprise of family recognition—"Oh! if there ain't mamma in the pit!" He should have stuck to clown as his one triumphant impersonation. A living example of the old-fashioned clown is Mr. Harry Payne, member of a family of true pantomimists, whose art is well-nigh lost. My only quarrel with him is on the score of his superabundant oratory. He rushes to the opposite extreme of reticence, and is positively didactic and sermonizing. This may be in obedience to a serious "call;" and, indeed, he never fails to justify his practice by gaining rounds of applause. But if he said less, his pantomime would be more striking, even though its excellence might be less loudly acknowledged. When Mr. Harry Payne shall quit the stage, the last of the old school of pantomimists will have departed. His father, from whom he and a harlequin brother derived knowledge and skill in their vocation, had continued that school directly from the famous clown himself; for the eldest Payne, in his boyhood, had played harlequin to Grimaldi. The present Mr. Payne is the pink of clowns, clean of limb and neat of action; and were the pantomime of yore to be revived, there would be no man more competent to lead the scheme of restoration.

Acrobatic clowns, who would have been classified as posture-masters in olden times, have pushed aside the Matthews and Boleno type. Huline, Flexmore, and Lauri, are names of clever gymnasts who, with well-merited success, entered vigorously on the work of clowning, for which their gifts of humour only in part qualified them. Their deficiency of the stolid powers needed for a conception of the lazy, thievish clown, was compensated by nimble antics and comic agility; and a good clown of the Flexmore kind was infinitely preferable to our old acquaintance who was "not a singing clown," and yet could not tumble. But, perhaps, the best place for an agile clown, such, for instance, as Little Sandy and Joe Bibb, is in the ring rather than on the stage, especially now that the days of the harlequinade appear to be numbered.

What is a Stage Play?

IN advocating a general extension in the design and order of the amusements of the people, we must not forget the obstinate part the law has taken in hindering any reform in the concert halls and singing rooms designed for the recreation of the masses. It sounds an odd thing to say, but it is nevertheless true, that a worthless Act of Parliament passed in the reign of George II. to put down disorderly houses, and prevent the singing of Jacobite songs, long before the modern music hall was born or thought of, is, taken in connection with the Stage Play Act of Victoria, the direct aid and abettor of all the foolish vulgarity and meaningless trash that disgrace and depress the trade in cheap and popular amusement.

It may be interesting to trace the history of the existing music hall. The father of the music halls in London is Mr. Charles Morton, and the earliest specimen of this kind of singing room was the first Canterbury Hall. It arose in this way. At a public-house called the Canterbury Arms, just off the Westminster Road, there was a very respectable "free and easy," frequented by the tradesmen and artisans of the neighbourhood. At this place the music was so excellent and the order so admirable that Mr. Morton was petitioned to allow the wives and daughters of his patrons to enjoy themselves respectably with their husbands and sweethearts. He consented, and the place became so popular that he built the first Canterbury Hall, engaging the very best musicians and singers. Mr. Morton's aim was very laudable and ambitious. He believed in the best music admirably performed. He offered Sims Reeves £1,200 a month to sing one song every night. As it was, the Canterbury Hall was a popular success; so much so indeed that a second magnificent concert room was erected, to which a picture gallery was attached containing works of art that had cost £10,000. The Canterbury Hall was the father of the Oxford Music Hall, also built by Mr. Morton in conjunction with his partner Mr. Stanley; and Londoners of twenty odd years ago can well remember the excellent operatic selections that delighted the public and kept the atmosphere of the music hall pure before the reign of the "Lion

Comique" and the persistent persecution of the theatrical trade. Mr. Morton, Mr. Weston, and others, who were earnest in their endeavour to give the best entertainment at the cheapest cost, soon understood what their patrons required. That essential may be summed up in the one word "variety." They did not require long stage plays, or dramas, or sustained efforts in dramatic composition; but they did very earnestly demand short half-hour amusements that had some sense in them. A dramatic scene between a husband and wife, what the French call a "saynète," a monologue adapted to middle-class life, an amusing farce, a little operetta, everything by turns and nothing long, sometimes fun and occasionally pathos. These humble folk who did not require the sustained mental effort of an elaborate stage-play wanted to know why they might not enjoy "Box and Cox," or "The Cosy Couple," or "The Birthplace of Podgers," whilst smoking was going on and the waiters were in the room. The theatrical trade determined that the music-hall trade should have no such liberty. Then was commenced a series of determined prosecutions, and both magistrates and judges were called upon to decide "What is a stage play?" under the meaning of the Act. It has been held that a pantomime sketch, in which two persons very cleverly, with rapid change of dress, represented the various characters in a Christmas pantomime, was illegal on the music hall stage; it has been decided that two persons burlesqueing Mazeppa on basket-horses were defying an Act of Parliament; even Mr. Pepper's Ghost Illusion, which was legal at the Polytechnic, was held to be highly indecorous and out of the question at the Canterbury Music Hall. Since then ballets have been interdicted, entertainments containing any sense in them have been threatened, and the music-hall proprietors, paralysed by the unintelligible law, and nervous about the renewal of their annual licenses, have kissed the rod, given up improvement in despair, and have fallen back on the comic singer, who, when not suggestive or indecent, has become duller and more depressing year by year. Again and again the music-hall proprietors have met the theatrical managers, and endeavoured to define a stage play, and to make mutual concessions, but with feeble results. Acts of Parliament have been drafted that have been consigned to the waste-paper basket, and, from want of active intervention, London has become the most unevenly amused capital in the civilized world.

In view of the wretchedness and dejection of the East-end of London, and the scarcity of amusements anywhere but at the west, surely the time has come for reviewing and readjusting the laws that govern our amusements. The Anti-Jacobite Act can have nothing whatever to do with the requirements of the year 1884, and it is surely unfair that any spirited capitalist of to-day with as much energy, good sense and high-minded endeavour as were shown by the original designer of music halls should be hampered and hindered in his good work, not by the people, or by prejudice, but by the law that is supposed to encourage order and decency. The evidence that the poorer classes want to be amused, and desire a more rational form of amusement is irresistible ; it is acknowledged by the clergy of every denomination. But the most high-minded philanthropist, with grand schemes for decent amusement, would find he was checkmated by various incomprehensible and old-fashioned Acts of Parliament. The theatrical trade insists on its right to deny the drama in any form to anyone who has a pipe, cigar, or cigarette in his mouth. The man who smokes, and the woman who tolerates it, are considered outside the pale of dramatic civilization. The artisan is shut out from the paradise of plays whenever he dares to soothe his nerves with birdseye. Farce and operetta, pathetic play and tender scene, words that move, and thoughts that burn, are reserved for Rechabites. And yet, forsooth, our best conducted theatres reek with tobacco, their halls are dense with smoke after every act, they are for the most part, with their bars and refreshment-rooms, mere public-houses in disguise, and differ infinitesimally from the best-conducted music halls. Has not the time come for the exercise of a little free trade ? Not a human being would be detracted from the theatre proper because the artisans of Bermondsey and Shadwell were allowed to enjoy their pipe over a half-hour dramatic scene. If we can make the people better and purer and happier by amusing them decently, why not try as an experiment the abolition of an indefensible monopoly ?

C. S.



Pepys at the Play.

FEW playgoers in any age could more justly be qualified as "habitual," than that shrewd official, Mr. Samuel Pepys, sometime of Seething Lane, in the City of London. When time allowed, the Admiralty clerk was accustomed to visit the theatre three, and often four or five, evenings in a week. It is matter for marvel that he managed to discharge his duties with notable efficiency, while he found opportunity for joining in all the amusements of a gay society, and all the gossip of an age of busybodies. His ideas of dramatic criticism appear peculiar to modern readers, his non-appreciation of the masterpieces of Shakespeare especially exciting our derision, yet it is notorious that the major portion of the playgoing world during the Restoration period preferred the ribaldry of Etherege to the splendid creations of the Bard of Avon! The causes of so contemptible a taste have been fully and frequently described, and need not be reviewed again. It is sufficient to remember that, following the certain law of reaction, the austerity of the Commonwealth gave way to the license of the Merry Monarch, and amusement became almost a synonymous term with indecency. Thus we must deal leniently with an astute, yet in some respects simple-minded, individual, who would have been the last in the world to find fault with the dicta of a king for whose lightest word of approval he would have turned a summersault in the mud. If he was somewhat of a sycophant, he was no exception to the rule. Pepys had endured the oppressive atmosphere of Puritan piety in common with others compelled to suppress their natural inclination for gaiety, and it is not to be wondered at that he hailed the re-opening of the theatres and the production of light and sparkling comedies with unfeigned satisfaction.

Sir Walter Scott, in his charming essay on the now famous "Diary," observes that "if the curious affect dramatic antiquities—a line which has special charms for the present age—no book published in our time has thrown so much light upon plays, playwrights, and play-actors."

It is his love for public amusements and for small talk that chiefly distinguishes the vivacious little dandy from his sedate and far better educated contemporary, John Evelyn, of Sayes Court.

In the article already alluded to, the Wizard of the North remarks that, with all his industry, Pepys was essentially a man of pleasure. "He appears to have been ardent in quest of amusement" to an extent "which he himself seems to have considered as excessive." Yet the same writer speaks of Mr. Pepys as being "to a certain degree, a man of pleasure." Why his former estimate should have been thus modified is not clear. Certain it is that, had stern necessity allowed him to follow his own inclinations, Pepys would have done far less work and enjoyed himself even more than, with his frequent opportunities, he actually succeeded in doing. How he obtained so many hours of relaxation in the midst of his official labours, especially in the busy days of the Dutch war, can only be imagined by crediting him with an unusual faculty for condensing his reports, and expanding one hour into two.

It was nearly three months after the return of the King before Mr. Pepys found time to visit a theatre. For once at least, business had interfered with pleasure, and he, no doubt, gladly accepted an invitation from Captain Ferrers to see Beaumont and Fletcher's "Loyal Subject" at the Cockpit. On that occasion Edward Kynaston, following the old custom, acted a heroine's part, and, as Pepys writes, "made the loveliest lady that ever I saw in my life." It was some time, however, before he began to frequent the playhouses to any considerable degree.

On the 20th of November, in the first year of Charles II.'s inglorious reign, we find this entry: "Mr. Shepley and I to the new playhouse near Lincoln's Inn Fields (which was formerly Gibbon's Tennis Court), where the play of "Beggar's Bush" was newly begun; and so we went in and saw it well acted; and here I saw, the first time, one Moone, who is said to be the best actor in the world, lately come over with the King, and, indeed, it is the finest playhouse, I believe, that ever was in England." What would he have said could he have been transported to the newest theatre, near the Haymarket, or seen, instead of guttering candles, the brilliance of the electric light? From that time his visits to the play were of frequent occurrence, and he became acquainted

with various members of the companies attached to the leading temples of Thespis.

On the 3rd of January, 1661, Mr. Pepys again saw Beaumont and Fletcher's "Beggar's Bush," on which occasion he beheld, for the first time, the feminine characters played by women instead of pretty boys.

It may be of interest to summarize the opinions of this mercurial playgoer with reference to some of Shakespeare's works.

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" was brought out at the King's Theatre in 1662, and branded by the diarist as "the most insipid, ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life, . . . which I had never seen before, nor shall ever see again." "The Merry Wives of Windsor" appeared equally foolish to Pepys, though one might reasonably suppose that, of all Shakespeare's plays, this, turning entirely on the illicit desires of a hoary sinner, would have suited the taste of the licentious cavaliers of Whitehall, from whom our time-serving hero probably took his cue. "Henry VIII.," apparently found more favour with the courtiers, for we find that Pepys "went with resolution to like it," having heard it "so much cried up" by the leaders of *haut ton*. But it must be remembered that this play had been hashed up by Sir William Davenant to suit the prevailing taste, and that, by gaudy decoration, music, and modernization, he had made it acceptable to the shallow criticism of Charles and his flatterers. "Acting Editions" of Shakespeare's plays were sad travesties in the days when Mr. Pepys patronized the drama.

In this instance it is pleasant to find that our hero preferred his own honest opinions to those of the sycophants. It must not, however, be forgotten that he felt perfectly confident that his heresy would never become public. With all his loyalty to the Stuarts he could not hide from his secret thoughts the hollow mockery of the popular adulation.

The following quotation is delightful, and alone contains material for an instructive essay:—

"Down to Woolwich (and there I just saw and kissed my wife, and saw some of her painting, which is very curious; and away again to the King), and back again with him in the barge, hearing him and the Duke talk, and seeing and observing their manner of discourse. And, God forgive me! though I admire them with all the duty possible, yet the more a man considers and observes

them, the less he finds of difference between them and other men, though (blessed be God!) they are both princes of great nobleness and spirits."

Truly, Mr. Pepys, they were.

Thus we see that, so great was the writer's veneration for the reigning family that, even in the seclusion of his study, and concealing his words in a cypher, he was half afraid to acknowledge that Charles, the slave of such a creature as Barbara Villiers, and James, the seducer of Clarendon's homely daughter, were no better than other men.

Could not Pepys feel that he himself, with all his flirtations and childish vanities, was a jewel of price compared with either of the useless and exalted personages who rowed in the same boat on that occasion!

This is a digression; yet, at the risk of losing altogether the original subject of consideration, one more extract, somewhat akin, though less timidly written than the first, must be noted:—

"To the tennis court, and there saw the King play at tennis, and others; but to see how the King's play was extolled, without any cause at all, was a loathsome sight—though sometimes, indeed, he did play very well, and deserved to be commended; but such open flattery is beastly."

Again, Samuel Pepys, you are perfectly right—"so far, the Court is quite of your opinion."

To return, however, to Pepys's commentaries on the plays of William Shakespeare.

"Henry the Eighth," as presented by Davenant, he considered "so simple a thing, made up of a great many patches, that, besides the shows and processions of it, there is nothing in the world good or well done."

That observation, Mr. Pepys, might be applied equally well to many dramas that did not see the light for nearly two centuries after you were laid in your last resting-place in Crutched Friars' Church.

"The Indian Queen," by Dryden and Howard, was held by the Cavaliers superior to "Henry VIII."

At the Duke's Theatre "Macbeth," "a pretty good play," was admirably acted, while the company of that house, having been invited to Whitehall to perform before the Court, presented

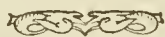
"Henry V." "in most excellent habit, all new vests being put on but this night." Unfortunately, Mr. Pepys was placed so high and so far off that he missed most of the words, and sat with a wind coming into his back and neck, which did much trouble him. On a second occasion, "Macbeth" gave greater satisfaction. "Though I saw it lately," says Pepys, "yet appears a most excellent play in all respects, but especially in divertissement, though it be a deep tragedy, which is a strange perfection in a tragedy, it being most proper here and suitable." That "yet" appears to intimate that, in the writer's opinion, few plays would bear seeing a second time.

At the King's Theatre, "Henry IV." was produced in 1667, and Pepys was of course in his place, and, "contrary to expectation, was pleased in nothing more than in Cartwright's speaking of Falstaffe's speech about 'What is honour?' The house full of Parliament men, it being holiday with them; and it was observable how a gentleman of good habit sitting just before us, eating of some fruit in the midst of the play, did drop down as dead, being choked; but with much ado Orange Moll did thrust her finger down his throat, and brought him to life again." Miss Moll appears to have been a lady of ready resource.

"The Tempest" at the Duke's drew a big house, possibly because the King and Court were there, for so innocent a play could have had few attractions in itself; however, it is allowed that though it had no great wit, yet it was "good above ordinary plays." We have seen the unappreciative spirit with which Pepys regarded Shakespeare's works when performed on the stage. His cool and deliberate judgment, away from the clamour of tongues and the footlights, is illustrated in one or two instances. Of these the best, perhaps, is found in the entry for August 20, 1666: "To Deptford by water, reading 'Othello, Moore of Venice,' which I ever heretofore esteemed a mighty good play, but having so lately read 'The Adventures of Five Houres,' it seems a mean thing." This latter was Colonel Tuke's adaptation from Calderon. This note speaks for itself of the abilities of the Clerk of the Acts as a dramatic critic. He was guided by the fleeting impression of the moment, and did not stop to consider impartially the merits and demerits of one play and another.

The popularity of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays is sufficiently attested by the frequent notices of their performance in the

“Diary.” Those admirable pieces, “The Beggar’s Bush” and “The Mayd’s Tragedy,” appear to have been in particular request. Ludovick Carlell’s adaptation from the French, entitled “Heraclius,” was a drama after Pepy’s own heart, “an excellent play, to his extraordinary content.” In “The Wildgoose Chase,” Mr. Pepys “met with nothing extraordinary at all, but very dull inventions and designs,” though he would seem to have been more taken up with his favourite, Mrs. Knipp, the pretty actress, than with the play. The extent of his friendship for this fascinating little lady is uncertain, though he certainly appears to have been on the best of terms with her. There is no doubt that he was fond of frequenting the society of such fair jades as Mistress Gwynne, whom he made no scruple of kissing in his wife’s presence. His admiration for “Nellie,” and his sorrow when her frailties took her away from the stage seem to have been genuine sentiments, and indeed pretty Mrs. Pepys fancied sometimes that he took too great an interest in the leading ladies of the King’s and Duke’s Theatres, but that was no doubt unfounded jealousy on her part. Her husband was fond of the play, and naturally interested in the performers, and if he, a lively individual well on the right side of forty, preferred the actresses to the actors, who shall blame him?



Our Musical=Box.

THE concert season has commenced, without as yet exhibiting any conspicuous features of novelty or interest. Vladimir de Pachmann has paid two or three brief visits to the metropolis, on each occasion drawing crowded houses to listen to his extraordinary digital deftness and exquisite finish of execution; Miss Robertson, a willing captive to the roseate fetters of Hymen, has taken leave of the musical public in a concert which seems to have generated an epidemic of laryngitis amongst our leading English tenors, three of whom fell victims to that insidious malady only a few hours before they should have taken part in the entertainment in question; Dvorák’s “Stabat Mater” has been performed for a second time to the unqualified delight of all who heard it; and a number of minor “events,” scarcely worth chronicling after date, have come off within the last month in rapid, if not remunerative, succession. The most promising prospect of our coming operatic season is that connected with Carl Rosa’s too brief reign at Drury Lane. “Sigurd,” the Covent Garden novelty, may achieve a *succès d’estime*; but that its pecuniary results will justify the expenditure about to be lavished upon it is

more than doubtful. Let no lover of "tone-plays" make too sure that German opera, despite Herr Franke's confident circulars, will alternate with Italian opera at Covent Garden. All the obstacles—and they are many—to the realization of this project have not yet been overcome, and I should not be surprised if it were abandoned, even at the eleventh hour. However, sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. Operetta is steadily ousting opera from public favour in this country, not merely because people crave for mere amusement unalloyed by the necessity for any intellectual effort on the part of those who pay for pastime, but because they prefer good all-round performances, such as are supplied to them at the Savoy, Comedy, and Avenue, for instance, to the bewildering contrasts between stars of the first magnitude and farthing rushlights, with which the Covent Garden management is wont to afflict its supporters. I think, and hope, that the sidereal system, in connection with Italian opera, is doomed to extinction. If, as appears not improbable, Adelina Patti should return from America too late and too weary to fulfil her provisional engagements in London, Mr. Gye will do wisely to court prosperity by raising the standard of average merit in his casts—that is, if he aspire to filling his theatre with audiences of a remunerative rather than complimentary character. The experiment is surely worth trying; the more so as experience, of late years, must have fully convinced him that second and third-rate stars, inefficiently supported, do not pay their expenses.

The most learned, thoughtful, and just of contemporary musical critics in this or any other country, Mr. Joseph Bennett, has just published a *recueil* of his criticisms for the past twelvemonth, under the title of "The Musical Year, 1883." Besides Mr. Bennett's original matter (chiefly reproduced from the columns of the *Daily Telegraph*), this interesting volume contains a chronological record of the more important musical performances and incidents which took place during the period with which it deals, thus acquiring great value and importance as a book of reference. Many of the author's "notices" deserve to rank as essays, so exhaustively, instructively, and entertainingly do they handle their subjects. Apart from their artistic interest, which especially appeals to the intelligence and sympathies of the more exclusively musical public, they are delightful reading to all persons of taste and culture, being written in a vigorous and luminous style, and pervaded by a strain of pungent and refreshing humour. They are, in a word, the outcome of a powerful mind, ripe judgment, and deep, reverent love for the art of which their writer treats. No musician or music-lover should fail to peruse them with the attention they so pre-eminently merit.

A few days ago the cantata "Parizadeh," composed by that genial and scholarly young musician, Mr. Wilfrid Bendall, was published by Messrs. Stanley Lucas, Weber, & Co., and will shortly be performed, as I understand, by Mr. Willing's admirable choir. "Parizadeh" teems throughout with fresh and pleasing melodies, and exhibits conspicuous constructive ability in its composer, whose aim is manifestly to gratify the public ear with concourse of sweet sounds, not to puzzle it by propounding intricate

contrapuntal problems, or startling thematic treatments. The cantata is melodious *avant tout*, and always agreeably so; invention is by no means lacking to it; several of its numbers disclose intrinsic claims to popularity of a more general and enduring description than that usually obtained by works of this particular class. Amongst these I may mention an unaccompanied chorus ("Farewell, before we leave thee") of remarkable tenderness and sweetness; a telling duet for soprano and baritone ("Ah, did I know"); a delightful dance of Bayadères in the Oriental manner, adorned with several quaint and highly effective harmonic transitions; and an extremely well-written trio ("Adieu, my own sweet wife") which has a bright concert-room future before it. I heartily congratulate Mr. Bendall on this valuable addition to the list of his published works, and confidently look forward to a prosperous career for "Parizadeh," the youngest of musical Paris, who makes her start in life under the auspices of so gifted a godfather.

Several songs by Mr. George J. Bennett—in all probability the youngest composer of the day—have recently come under my notice, and have caused me no less astonishment than pleasure. They exhibit a mastery over the technicalities of the musical art that would do credit to such accomplished and experienced song-writers as Lassen, Jensen, or Sucher. Mr. Bennett has ideas of his own—invariably clever and ingenious ones—about the treatment of melodies. Sometimes these ideas tempt him to overload his accompaniments with mechanical difficulties that disqualify them for performance by the average society pianist, or, indeed, by any but a skilled executant. Nevertheless, the accompaniments in question are invariably interesting, and frequently so beautiful in themselves as to constitute the chief attraction of the song to which they appertain. This is conspicuously the case in the "Spring Song," a bright, exhilarating, and somewhat Schumannesque composition, as well as in that of a "Lullaby," the P.F. accompaniment to which, by reason of its erudite intricacy, can scarcely fail to prove the reverse of a blessing to mothers. Mr. Bennett's melodies (*testé* "The Child's First Grief") are descriptive rather than flowing; they are obviously written with pictorial purpose, and therefore necessarily lack spontaneity. The young composer has concentrated his creative powers rather upon the garment than the figure; and the expediency of bidding for concert-room or drawing-room favour has, as a rule, not influenced him for a moment. This fine youthful scorn of conventional requirements characterizes all his songs (of those I have seen) except one, "When Stars are in the quiet Skies," the sympathetic simplicity of which should entitled it to wide-spread popularity. Mr. Bennett's are the faults of exuberant study, combined with an irrepressible consciousness of power, and a laudable ambition to do something indisputably new. They will, I doubt not, soon be rejected by his riper experience; and, freed from them, his genius—for genius he undoubtedly possesses—will enable him to attain high rank—perhaps the very highest—amongst the English composers of times that are coming and hard at hand.

WM. BEATTY-KINGSTON.

Our Play=Box.

“BREAKING A BUTTERFLY.”

A New Play, in Three Acts, by HENRY A. JONES and H. HERMAN, founded on Ibsen's “Norah.”
First produced at the Prince's Theatre, on Monday, March 3, 1884.

Humphrey Goddard...	MR. KYRLE BELLEW.	Flora Goddard... ..	MISS LINGARD.
Philip Dunkley... ..	MR. H. BEERBOHM-TREE.	Agnes Goddard ...	MISS HELEN MATHEWS.
Martin Grittle	MR. JOHN MACLEAN.	Mrs. Goddard	MRS. LEIGH MURRAY.
Dan Bradbury	MR. G. W. ANSON.	Maid	MISS ANNIE MACLEAN.

“A PLEASANT little play” or “an unpleasant little play,” “an interesting little play” or “a tedious little play”—these and such as these are the terms in which “Breaking a Butterfly” has been described. The one point on which all critics have agreed is that, whether good, bad, or indifferent, the play is unimportant and trifling. This judgment is undeniably just; whatever may be its merits, it is certainly not a great play. Therefore, I am prepared for general scepticism, when I assert that the play on which it is founded is a very great play, that the character of its heroine is comparable in point of sheer warm-blooded vitality to such a creation as Hetty Sorrel or Maggie Tulliver, and that some of its scenes are of unsurpassed theatrical effect. What has become of all this vitality? is the obvious question; one which I cannot quite answer even to my own satisfaction. Take a piece of music, omit all the harmonies, break up and rearrange the melodic phrases, and then play them with your forefinger on the pianoforte—do this, and you will have some idea of the process to which Messrs. Jones and Herman have subjected “A Doll's House.” The mere theatrical action of Ibsen's play bears to its social and moral significance the relation of a melody to its supporting harmonies. No one is a greater master than he of the theatrical counterpoint, so to speak, which develops every detail of plot and character from an underlying ethical “plain-song,” and so gives it symbolic generality in addition to its individual truth. It is this combination of the moralist—or “immoralist,” as some would prefer to say—with the dramatic poet which has given Ibsen his enormous influence in the three Scandinavian kingdoms; and it is this which makes his plays suffer more than any others by transportation across the Channel. For the British public will not have didactics at any price, and least of all such didactics as Ibsen's. Even a moralist like Dumas *filis* would be easier to deal with. The problems he presents are much less subtle. They turn upon absolute vice in one form or another—generally in one very definite form—and are not concerned with such intangible matters as egoism, intellectual dishonesty, conventional cowardice, repression of individuality, heredity in moral (and physical) disease, and so forth. Moreover, Dumas has not Ibsen's art of welding his didactics into his action. He preaches through the mouth of one or other of his characters, so that in many of his plays a few strokes of the pen would remove all the moralizing, and leave the action intact. Ibsen never preaches or, at least, never makes one

character his mouthpiece. His moral, or rather his morals, for they are many, must be inferred from the whole structure of character and action. His didactics cannot be cut away at one stroke ; they must be torn out by the roots, and are then found to have sent fibres into every scene and speech of the play. Messrs. Jones and Herman have gone about this eradication resolutely and unflinchingly, and, in so doing, have necessarily mangled and scarified their original until there is little of it left.

It is now about fifteen years since Ibsen finally deserted verse as a dramatic medium, and nine or ten since he devoted himself entirely to pictures of actual modern life. In the interval he had published his great double drama, "Emperor and Galilean," with Julian the Apostate for its hero. It has been translated by Miss C. Ray (London, 1876). Of his fantastic dramas in verse, both have been translated into German, one of them, "Brand," as often as four or five times, but no translation into English has yet been attempted, the difficulties presented by his strong local colour and rich versification being probably insuperable. In "The Pillars of Society" (1876-7) he took his stand once for all upon the solid ground of modern life. "I have quite given up verse," he wrote in a private letter, "and have devoted myself to the incomparably more difficult task of fashioning my poems in simple, sincere prose." A slightly condensed translation of "The Pillars of Society," by the present writer, was produced at a morning performance at the Gaiety, in December, 1880, but failed to make any impression. Nevertheless the play, though not in itself such a remarkable work as "A Doll's House," is probably much better fitted for the English stage, and had I had the courage (or audacity) to adapt instead of translating it, and to transfer the action to England, the result might have been different.

In 1879 appeared "A Doll's House." In Scandinavia its success was electrical. Edition after edition poured from the press. At the Copenhagen Royal Theatre, Fru Hennings made an almost unprecedented sensation in the part of Nora, which was repeated on a smaller scale by Fru Juul in Christiania. The character of Nora entered into the national life of the three kingdoms. Her sayings became catchwords among the frivolous, watchwords among the more serious. Continuations of the play were written, attempts to answer the mark of interrogation with which Ibsen characteristically closed his work. One amusing *jeu d'esprit* represented a discussion of the drama at a children's party, at which the little hostess (æet. six or seven) gravely maintained that Nora was quite right in leaving her husband, and asserted that had she been in her position she would have done the same thing. At last the subject had to be placed under a taboo in society, for, once brought upon the carpet, it left no chance for other themes of conversation. So strong a hold did the play take of the national mind ; and the Scandinavian public is more than ordinarily critical, being familiar, on the stage, not only with its own rich dramatic literature, but with the masterpieces of the French and German drama. Clearly it must have been a very different work from "Breaking a Butterfly."

It soon penetrated into Germany, and even into Poland. At Warsaw, Madame Modjeska scored greatly in the part of Nora, and Frau Hedwig

Niemann-Rabbe positively turned the heads of the difficult Berlin public. Ibsen's conclusion, however, was found too startling. Audiences could not bear to see Nora calmly leave her husband's home, and, to his bitter regret, Ibsen was forced to make her relent on hearing the voices of her children. It was pointed out to him that if he did not make the change some one else would, and, as he had no means of preventing this, he made a virtue of necessity. The published German translation, however (in Reclam's Universal-Bibliothek), exactly follows the original, and to this I would refer any reader who wishes to gain a fair idea of the play. The English translation by Miss Frances Lord (Griffiths & Farran) is a conscientious piece of work, but heavy and not always accurate. There exists, by the way, another English translation, published in Copenhagen by some gentleman who seems to have conceived that in order to write our language he had but to procure a Danish-English dictionary, look up all the words, and take the first meaning that came to hand. The result is more humorous than "English as She is Spoke." The curious may consult it in the British Museum.

What, then, are the differences between the Norwegian and the English play? They are so many, that it will be better to begin with the resemblances, which can be much more easily enumerated.

The events which precede the rise of the curtain are practically the same in each. A young wife, without her husband's knowledge, borrows money for a journey to Italy, which is to save her husband's life. Ignorant of the true import of the act, she writes her father's name on the back of the promissory note, he being then on his deathbed and unable to attend to business. The husband's life is saved, and through years of poverty the wife manages to keep her debt concealed from him and to pay some of it off. At length the husband is appointed to a well-paid post as manager of a bank. The man from whom the money has been borrowed is a clerk in this bank. His character is shady, and the husband's first act is to dismiss him. At this point the drama begins—and here the resemblance between the two plays may almost be said to end. In each the money-lender opens the wife's eyes to the seriousness of her position, and forces her, by the threat of a charge of forgery, to intercede for him with her husband. In each the intercession is ineffectual, and the money-lender explains the situation in a letter to the husband, which he drops into a letter-box with a glass back, visible on the stage. In each the wife makes a pretext of rehearsing a tarantella so as to distract her husband's attention from the letter box and its contents. These are, literally, the sole points of resemblance between the two plays.

Now for the differences. The easiest way, perhaps, to make them clear will be to indicate the idea of Ibsen's play.

Nora Helmer is the daughter of a thoughtlessly unprincipled though not absolutely dishonest government official. Her husband, Helmer, met her through being deputed to examine her father's accounts. He fell in love with her, and, though as a rule a man of strict probity, for her sake he winked at certain irregularities in her father's conduct of his office. Naturally of a courageous and truthful disposition, Nora has yet been

brought up with no conception of the necessity for truth in the every-day affairs of life. To her nothing is "as easy as lying." Scarcely has the curtain risen when we find her telling small fibs in mere childish glee, and we soon learn that her life for years past has been one string of deceptions forced upon her by the necessity of paying off her debt without her husband's knowledge. We find Helmer, too, treating her as an irresponsible being, a child, a bird—anything, in short, but a woman—and showing clearly that he loves her as a mere plaything, not believing, or at any rate never having realized, that she too has a soul. Thus, as she herself bitterly complains when anguish has at last developed the doll into a woman, her father and her husband have conspired to keep her ignorant of the realities of life, of her rights, and of her obligations. She has all the time felt a vague longing for a higher and fuller life than this doll existence—a longing which has found partial and perverted satisfaction in her struggles to keep her priceless secret as to the money to which Helmer owes his life. She is, in short, a fine nature, warped and stunted through unfortunate hereditary and educational influences, and totally misunderstood by the husband whom she, in her turn, totally misunderstands. In the English play there is nothing of all this. Flora Goddard is presented to us, once for all, as a butterfly wife, a mere Frou-Frou. The conditions which have produced her character are nowhere hinted at ; it becomes at once shadowy, uninteresting, incredible.

What, then, of the husband? If all the subtlety had to be eliminated from Nora's nature, this was doubly necessary with the still more subtly conceived character of Helmer. He is, in the original, what may be called a moral sensualist, conventionally moral by reason of a sort of mild æsthetic sensibility which stands him in the stead of conscience, but, for the rest, thoroughly self-righteous, shallow, and egoistic. What English audience could be expected to take the trouble of understanding a character like this? He is Nora's hero. She endows him, in her imagination, with all the courage, strength, and unselfishness which exist, unknown and undeveloped, in her own soul. She never doubts that when the forgery is brought to light he will shield the woman who has devoted herself to him not wisely but too well, and will take the guilt upon himself. It is this which she is determined to prevent, even at the cost of her own life.

Krogstad, the holder of the forged acceptance, has dropped into the letter-box a letter telling Helmer everything ; but there is a remote chance that, through the influence of a friend of Nora's whom he had once loved, Krogstad may be induced to demand his letter back unopened. The great point is to gain time. It is the afternoon of Christmas Day, and on the following evening the Helmers are going to a fancy-dress ball, where Nora, in the costume of a Capri peasant, is to dance the tarantella. Just as Helmer is about to open the letter-box, she begs him, with breathless eagerness, to play for her while she rehearses the dance. She goes through it in a wild fever of excitement, and he, seeing that she is really overwrought and ill, consents to put aside business for twenty-four hours, and devote himself entirely to her until the fancy-ball is over. Thus the crisis is deferred till the next day, and thus the tarantella is justified. In the

third act, Helmer leads her in, panting and exhausted, after her brilliantly successful performance at the ball. He is in a transport of sensuous passion; she is nerving herself for suicide. The lurid intensity of the scene is heightened (after a fashion I have not space to explain) by means of the character of Dr. Rank, a very important personage, who has entirely disappeared from the English play. At last Nora insists that Helmer shall go and read his letters, intending, meanwhile, to escape from the house and drown herself. Before she can do so, however, Helmer rushes from his study with Krogstad's letter in his hand. So far from having any idea of taking the guilt upon himself, he overwhelms her with selfish and brutal reproaches, and in that moment Nora's idol crumbles to dust. They are interrupted by the arrival of another letter from Krogstad, this time enclosing the forged note, and relinquishing all vindictive designs. In the reaction of relief, Helmer "forgives" Nora all, and expects her to resume the old life of their doll's house. But Nora cannot forgive *him*. A long scene ensues, which is the most debatable point of a debateable play. I used to think it dramatically bad, however ably written, and I still believe it to be a piece of powerful dramatic logic rather than of genuine human nature. But on seeing the play in Christiania last year, I was astonished to find this scene theatrically effective in the highest degree. The husband and wife are face to face in their silent home at the dead of night. Calmly, relentlessly, Nora proves to him that the card-castle of their married life has irrevocably collapsed. "He has never loved her, but only found it pleasant to be in love with her. . . . She has had no happiness with him—only amusement. . . . He is a stranger to her, and she will not live in the house of a stranger." As for her children, she is unfit to educate them until she has educated herself. She leaves her home at once and for ever. "Can nothing bring us together again?" asks Helmer in despair. "Only such a miraculous change in both of us," she replies, "as should make communion between us a *marriage*—farewell!"

Ibsen's drama is, in short, a plea for woman's rights—not for her right to vote and prescribe medicine, but for her right to exist as a responsible member of society, "a being breathing thoughtful breath," the complement and equal of man.

To make an English audience understand the spirit of the play was clearly impossible, so the adapters quite properly held that it would be equally futile to adhere to its letter. They adhered, indeed, to the letter-box, which, leading up to the tarantella, provided a novel effect for their heroine; but scarcely has Flora succeeded in diverting her husband's attention from the fatal letter when Dunkley appears to tell him the whole story by word of mouth, and all the excitement has gone for nothing. Thus the adapters have scarcely been happy in what they have retained of the original. What, then, have they cut out, and what added?

The three children are promptly suppressed, and with them disappears the supreme bitterness of the heroine's anguish, as well as one of the prettiest and most effective scenes in the play. Mrs. Linde, Nora's friend, who succeeds in getting the forged acceptance from Krogstad, is replaced by Martin Grittle, a virtuous book-keeper, who steals the fatal paper from

Dunkley. One would think this a jump from the frying-pan into the fire—from unintentional forgery to intentional robbery and receiving stolen goods ; but Dunkley fortunately does not take that view of the matter, and slinks off discomfited without even showing fight. The sombre figure of Dr. Rank disappears (very naturally) to make room for an ineffectual mother and sister of Goddard, and a comic personage who may be necessary for the audience, but is distinctly superfluous so far as the action is concerned. Krogstad, the cynical social pariah, becomes a much more commonplace villain in the person of Philip Dunkley. And, finally, with the change of Helmer into Humphrey Goddard, the whole meaning of the original is lost. The heroic Goddard does the very thing which Nora in her romantic imaginings had expected Helmer to do. He accuses himself of the forgery, and so makes matters a hundred times worse. A forgery committed by a thoughtless and inexperienced girl, without the smallest criminal intent and in the full belief that her father, on his recovery, would ratify the signature, is a much less serious matter than the like fault committed by an experienced man of business without the like excuses. Dunkley's accusation might have caused much unpleasantness when directed against Flora ; turned against Goddard, it meant nothing less than ruin. Thus the adapters gain a sympathetic character and a telling situation by flying in the face, not only of Ibsen, but of probability and common sense.

In the word "sympathetic" lies the key to the whole weakness of "Breaking a Butterfly." The adapters, or more properly the authors, have felt it needful to eliminate all that was satirical or unpleasant, and in making their work sympathetic they at once made it trivial. I am the last to blame them for doing so. Ibsen on the English stage is impossible. He must be trivialized, and I believe Messrs. Jones and Herman have performed that office as well as could reasonably be expected. They have produced a little play of unusual literary finish, and with all its weak points, far from uninteresting. All I wish to point out is that the expression of the play-bill, "founded on Ibsen's 'Nora,'" indicates even more than the authors' actual obligation to their original, and would be more exact if it read "founded on the ruins of Ibsen's 'Nora.'" Let the little play be judged on its own merits, which are not few ; but let it not be supposed to give the faintest idea of Ibsen's great "Et Dukkehjem."

Not many months ago I was present at a performance of the even more extraordinary drama of "Ghosts," which followed "A Doll's House." The scene was an ordinary drawing-room, and the "Ghosts," it may be well to explain, were purely metaphorical ; yet I have never experienced an intenser sensation within the walls of a theatre. It proved to me the possibility of modern tragedy in the deepest sense of the word ; but it also proved the impossibility of modern tragedy on the English stage.

WILLIAM ARCHER.



Our Omnibus=Box.

SIGNOR TOMMASO SALVINI is considered, not without reason, the finest living male exponent of his art. He returns to us after an eight years' absence, not, as many actors do, exhausted and enfeebled, a wreck of their former selves, but undiminished in tragic force, his voice more resonant and musical than ever, and in style quite as grand and impressive. The Othello of Salvini has been criticised from every possible point of view, both by those who have watched it with suspicion, and such as have studied it attentively again and again. Quite apart from the actor's method and his striking capacity, to which little exception could be taken, it was objected that Salvini paid more attention to the individual Moor as an Oriental, than to Shakespeare's picture of the despair that is the heritage of a human being who yields to jealousy. The occasional peevishness of personal sorrow, the hysterical notes of his despair, his mode of expressing love, the animal fierceness of his rage, his thirst for cruelty, his hunger for blood, expressed almost like a wild beast, his panther-like strides across the stage, the cutting of the throat instead of stabbing, were held with some vehemence to be unlike the Othello that Shakespeare drew. All this detail might be very Oriental, but it was assumed, for the sake of controversy, to be un-Shakesperian. Salvini, at any rate, in his desire to be conscientious, somewhat prejudiced his own cause. He disguised a very handsome face, he assumed a series of quite hideous and unbecoming costumes, and the gain of Orientalism was in many a scene a loss of interest. Without altogether yielding to the force of the argument of his opponents, Salvini has certainly moderated the occasional eccentricity of his Othello, and has, particularly in the last act, which created such a controversy, pitched his conception in a lower key. The Othello is less of an animal and more of a man. The wild beast paces are judiciously repressed, and by the omission of an important speech, "I have another weapon in this chamber," with its pathetic outburst over Desdemona's body, the sensitive ears of his audience are saved from what some of them irreverently termed "blubbing."

If then Salvini's Othello is less consistent with the original idea of a Moor first and a man afterwards, it will be more pleasing to such as go to the play with preconceived ideas, and will not be shaken from them. What Mr. G. H. Lewes has called the "impersonality" of Othello's grief is certainly more prominent. He expresses more a typical than a personal anguish. Apart from the matchless dignity of the man, his splendid presence, and his consummate power, it is the love of Othello that is the most striking characteristic of Salvini's performance. Here is a man strong, but yet tender; a hero and warrior, but still gentle; rude and rough in warfare, but yet considerate and courteous to woman; the kind of middle-aged man that might be personally attractive to a young girl.

He is no milksop or effeminate Othello—quite the contrary. He fires up at the mere mention of war; he tells the story of his conquests with relish; the “farewell” is that of a brave soldier; he is a martinet where discipline is concerned, and dismisses Cassio, not with a friend’s sentiment, but a general’s sternness, on parade; and yet at the outset, where Desdemona is concerned, the fine, strong man is gentleness and courtesy itself. He melts at the sight of her; he points with loving approbation to her as she pleads her selfish cause with the Senate; he is not uxorious, but honestly affectionate. In the expression of all this Salvini always was unrivalled. He is not very comely to look at, but many a woman would melt at his manner. All the opening scenes of the play (particularly the speech to the Senate and all that follows it) are admirable alike in intention and execution. We do not agree, however, with those who maintain that the third (or temptation) act remains the finest. It is in the fourth act, particularly in the scene where the envoy comes from Venice and is witness to Othello’s intemperate brutality to his wife, that Salvini shows himself the greatest artist. The instant change from assumed courtesy to muttered savagery—the bland diplomatic suaveness alternated by the growling curses at the wretched woman, are points of acting that are beyond praise. So also is his sarcasm with Emilia at the close of this act, when he flings the money at her feet, and departs reveling, as it were, in his devilish behaviour. The insanity of ill-temper could scarcely be more finely expressed.

Actors would do well to note Salvini’s extraordinary power in suddenly acquiring tragic force and dismissing it again. He never labours or wrestles with his passion. It does not exhaust him. There be players whom we have seen play who have perspired and groaned and exhausted themselves over scenes that do not so much as shake Salvini. When it does come, the force comes like a majestic torrent and carries everything before it—the voice, apparently without effort, rings and echoes about Covent Garden Theatre, but the actor is never spent or demoralized. No doubt Salvini has natural gifts that are extraordinary; but here, at any rate, is an example of what is meant by power—the power that alone really impresses an audience with characters so difficult of interpretation as Othello. Little as yet can be said in praise of the actor’s associates. Signor Udina, as Iago, began intelligently, notwithstanding his comical appearance; but it was, on the whole, the strangest reading of the part that has been seen. It was rather a tapster than the ancient, and made very little impression on any one scene or in any, save the first, soliloquy. Signora Cattaneo was an uninteresting Desdemona; but there was passionate force, however undisciplined, in the Emilia of Signora Piamonti.

The Spirit of the Times of New York is responsible for the following notes on the Irving campaign, and they are likely to be far more accurate than anything that has been printed and published in the English papers:—“Mr. Irving passed through New York on Sunday, on his way from Washington, where he had played a magnificent week’s engagement, to New England, where he is equally successful this week. He has completed

his arrangements with Manager Abbey for an exchange of countries next season. At the close of his season at the Star Theatre, in April, Mr. Irving will accept farewell banquets in New York and Boston, and then return to London, opening at his Lyceum in May, and playing there until the end of August. During this time he will add two plays to his repertory—probably “Faust” and “As You Like It”—the scenery and properties being prepared with special reference to their use in the American theatres. In September he will lease the Lyceum to Manager Abbey for eight months and set sail for Canada, touring through the principal cities, and entering the United States at Buffalo. His contracts for a season of eight months, are already signed, every manager with whom he has played being very glad to have him back again upon the same terms. Mr. Paiser, who is Manager Abbey’s representative now, will be the business manager for Mr. Irving during this tour. In the route which has been laid out there are no journeys of more than seven or eight hours, and thus much of the fatigue and expense of the present tour will be avoided. It is probable that, besides the two new plays produced in London, Mr. Irving will put another play upon the stage in New York, so as to have it ready for his return to London, and to demonstrate that scenery can be painted, properties manufactured or purchased, and actors rehearsed as satisfactorily here as in England, if our managers would but take the requisite pains. Harry Loveday will be the stage-manager. The company will number forty persons, and will be recruited here when necessary. A new leading juvenile will be engaged to take the place of William Terriss, who will remain in England to support Mary Anderson. In the meantime, Manager Abbey will open the Lyceum with Miss Anderson, who will be followed by other American stars. Bram Stoker, now the business manager for Mr. Irving, will be transferred to Manager Abbey, to resume charge of the front of the house at the Lyceum. The Presidential election is the only thing likely to interfere with the complete success of the Irving tour, and Mr. Irving is quite justified in believing that there will always be an audience for him in spite of the mass meetings and barbecues. As for Manager Abbey’s part of the speculation, the London popularity of Mary Anderson is already assured; and if Lawrence Barrett—who sails for England on Saturday and opens at the Lyceum on Easter Monday in “Yorick’s Love”—be also successful, there will be no difficulty about filling out the eight months with a couple of American comedians. The capital involved in this double enterprise, its broad, catholic spirit, and the influences which it will exert upon the people and the profession in both countries, make it the most important theatrical event in history since Shakespeare began to write plays.”

“This prompt return of Mr. Irving to America for a longer engagement is the most decisive reply to the malicious falsehoods of the London *Standard* and the New York *Times*, which have misrepresented his season here as a financial failure, whereas it has been unprecedentedly successful. Artistically it has also been a complete triumph. One of its most salutary effects is to dissatisfy our managers and our public with the class of barn-storming tragedians who have relied upon their personal popularity, and sacrificed everything else to their personal aggrandizement. A star who carries his

entire outfit in his hat and wardrobe basket, and presents Shakespeare with a scratch company, scratch scenery, and costumes hired from the local tailor, will no longer find favour with the public, and receive seventy-five per cent. of the gross receipts from the grumbling managers. Mr. Booth, who is at once the best and the worst of these barn-stormers, has been taught by the diminished receipts of this season that his is no longer a name to conjure with. Mr. Barrett, the first of our stars to adopt the Irving system of one for all and all for one, has made a fortune by presenting "*Francesca da Rimini*" with a strong company and appropriate accessories. In another year the tragedian who starts upon a tour without efficient support and a stock of scenery will be laughed at. The Irving system is the best system, both for the actors and the public, and therefore it must supersede the bad, old, slovenly, careless, inartistic management, both in England and America."

A bright example has been given of the truth that the London public is never slow in discovering a good thing. Modestly produced and unheralded by pretentious puff, a little play, called "*Nita's First*" at the Novelty Theatre soon made its mark; and I have little doubt that the author of the play, Mr. Warren, will be asked "to oblige again." As a comical play it is surely far more amusing and more truly ludicrous than many that have gone before. The types of character, exaggerated no doubt, are still true to nature as we understand it; and surely Mr. Irascible and his mild and inoffensive wife, who irritates without knowing it, are capital figures in any modern comedy. The subject matter is not very elevated in tone, but who expects it in plays of this kind; and I am unable to agree with those who see anything coarse or unduly vulgar in the imbroglio. Then again the stage management is from first to last excellent, and would be not unworthy of a play directed by Charles Wyndham himself. All the characters do extremely funny things seriously, and that is the essence of good comic acting. Where all do so well it is somewhat unfair to individualize; but I was much struck with the very excellent comedy of Miss Clara Jecks as a knowing servant; of Miss Minnie Bell—who promises to be an excellent actress—as an indignant wife who never ceases to be a lady; of Mr. T. W. Robertson as a cheeky boy; and of Mr. Warren, the author, as a light-headed scapegrace. The old people by Mr. Denny and Miss Robertson, are pictures that dwell long on the memory. They ought to be cut out and preserved in a more ambitious work. They belong to the comedy of to-day. But was it not a pity to select so unattractive a title as "*Nita's First*" for this funny play? Would it not have been better to have called it "*The First Baby*." A good title is everything in plays of this character. The Novelty Theatre has clearly made a start.

Every one who has studied and re-studied that remarkable stage work called "*Claudian*," will cordially agree with the remarks recently published by an eloquent American critic, Dr. Robert Laird Collier. Here is a student and a scholar who, obviously impressed by what he sees, records in eloquent language his impressions thereon, and is utterly impervious to the ridicule with which such an essay, thoughtful and admirable, is likely to be received

by the vulgarians, who would reduce all stage art to the lowest, silliest, and most abject level conceived by the dramatic Philistines. But a critic greater than Dr. Collier, as he would no doubt allow, has recorded his earnest admiration for Mr. Wilson Barrett and his performance as Claudian. Mr. Ruskin has been bold enough to praise in no unstinted terms this remarkable study, and to risk the charge of "critical epicenity," whatever that may mean—for the term, the words, their Greek derivation, and their meaning are obviously misunderstood by those who use them. Professor Wilson once said, I believe: "Not the male generation of critics, not the literary prigs epicene, not of decided sex the blues celestial," but the analogy between a "literary prig epicene" and a writer who ventures to encourage and applaud poetic, high-class and imaginative work, is not so clear as the Philistine band evidently thinks. At any rate, it would be better in certain quarters to be faithful to the more accepted phraseology that is understood by the people, and to leave hard words alone until their derivation is mastered. However, "Claudian" and such plays were not written with the idea of pleasing the doubtless excellent people who sneer at everything that soars above a commonplace intelligence. Such folk may be converted by-and-by, when they have ceased to make broad their phylacteries like their ancestors the Pharisees. Meanwhile they are amusing, and from their own point of view exceeding honest. They hate imaginative work, and they honestly say so. They state in print that "Claudian" makes them laugh and only appeals to their sense of the ludicrous; so why should they not pour out the vials of their little wrath on the misguided individuals who see in such plays as these a great source of delight and pleasure to countless playgoers and thoughtful men and women? At any rate the hundredth night of "Claudian" has arrived, and the play is better acted now than it was at the outset. It is to the last act of "Claudian" that attention should now be drawn, and to the masterly manner in which Mr. Wilson Barrett concludes this wonderful poem—for it is a poem of the stage as now finished and perfected by a deep-thinking and imaginative actor. A play that gives rise to thought must be a good play; a performance that dwells on the imagination must be a healthy play. And these recommendations "Claudian" certainly possesses. No one can give his mind to the study of the last act of "Claudian" without coming away from the theatre refreshed in intellect and stored with thought; and I maintain that an actor or an actress who can do this much for a hundredth part of his nightly audience is, in a certain sense, a public benefactor. The stage is going through one of its inevitable struggles. No one wants every theatre in London to be devoted to plays like "Claudian." It would be ridiculous and absurd to suggest such a thing. But whilst the unintelligent and vulgar and frivolous—the Chappies, and Johnnies, and the mutual admiration brigades, bound together by an iconoclastic oath—have dozens of theatres where they can worship at tawdry shrines, why should not their neighbours have one where its ritual is not so meretricious? Miss Eastlake, the gentle Almida; Miss Emmeline Ormsby, the fragile slave Serena; Mr. Frank Cooper, the love-struck sculptor, Theorus; Mr. Willard, the protecting priest; Miss Mary Dickens, the ragged beggar-woman; and many more, are far more earnest in their work than they were at the outset; and so far as

one can see, the play is not one for the mere moment, but will well bear printing and reviving. Such a play ought to be printed.

I have lately read a clever review of Henry Irving, from the pen of Mr. J. Ranken Towse, and published in *The Century Magazine*. This article is a curious mixture of just appreciation and unfairness, or want of perception; which shall I call it? Mr. Ranken Towse acknowledges "The personal fascination of the man," the merit of the profound student, the clever manager; but adds that Henry Irving is more of an artist than an actor, and goes on to say: "He labours to increase the pictorial effect to the utmost; and the over-elaboration of artifice in the illustrations of particular scenes often results in mental confusion." Over-elaboration and confusion are words I cannot agree with—yes, no doubt Henry Irving does not leave the most trifling detail to chance, but the effect resulting from this elaboration is one of grand simplicity. His scenes are pictures in the true sense of the word, not mere presentments of outward things, but a work containing the very heart and soul of the artist. Further, I find this: "It is plain now, not only that he cannot be included in the first rank of living tragedians, but he has scarcely any right to the name of tragedian at all, beyond the fact that he appears in tragic parts." Mr. Ranken Towse finds Irving too slight in figure, too weak in voice; does the word tragedian mean a herculean frame, with a stentorian voice, and nothing else? Can he call Irving unfit for tragedy in presence of his Hamlet? Yes. "There is not, moreover, sufficient originality in the conception, except in the matter of details, to atone for the frequent violation of elementary principles." This phrase is inconsistent; it is the very originality of the conception which evidently troubles Mr. Ranken Towse, and makes him weep over the violation of elementary principles. He is shocked by Irving's "Hamlet," as many others were, because it is unconventional; but has not the time come when we should throw aside that bugbear of tradition which has hampered and weighed down actors for so long. Take a school of painters for instance: condemn them to paint the same picture with the same treatment for generations and generations; what will it be at last?—a caricature. Henry Irving, like a bold man, has shown us that Shakespeare could be spoken and not ranted; that Hamlet was a man, not a myth: and the astonished public found that the great poet's tongue was not a dead language, but fresh, vivid, living words, which could appeal to our modern hearts as to those of old; and true lovers of art have hailed the man who has started this theatrical revolution. Mr. Ranken Towse is mistaken in stating that Irving "first attracted public attention as Digby Grant." As far back as 1867 such parts as Bob Gassit and Robert Redburn showed all who saw him that the young actor already possessed unusual dramatic power. Another mistake. Mr. Ranken Towse proceeds to remark: "It is a curious reflection that, not very many years ago, the present accepted representative of Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear, was only known in London as a player of eccentric light comedy and farce, who delighted by his grotesque portrayal of such characters as Jeremy Diddler and Alfred Jingle." These parts were undertaken by Irving after the creation of Digby Grant, and after he had already

made his mark in drama. And he did *not* at that time or any other “deal largely in burlesque exaggeration,” which Mr. Ranken Towse thinks may be the cause of the curious mannerisms which are such a terrible disfigurement now. The one thing I take most objection to in Mr. Ranken Towse’s article is the false appreciation of Irving’s Shylock, one of the actor’s grandest impersonations. Admitting that the result is not always equally successful, Henry Irving’s conception of a part is always earnest and true, but never has he approached nearer to his own ideal than in this particular instance. And this is the very one Mr. Ranken Towse selects to call “absolutely bad for an actor of his reputation.” He concedes that it has admirable points. “In appearance it was a most attractive figure—dignified, intellectual ;” but “the most fatal objection to the impersonation is its inconsistency.” Unless Irving’s acting in America is entirely at variance with what it was here, I am at a loss to understand what follows :—“In the earlier scenes—in fact, through the play up to the trial scene—Shylock is presented in his most forbidding colours. Those elements in his character which involve the pride of race and religion, and the love of family, are mainly disregarded, and the grosser attributes of sordid greed, supple civility, and malignant hate brought into boldest relief.” This I utterly fail to see in Irving’s interpretation. In *his Jew*, I saw a man endowed by Nature with dignity and fatherly affection, possessing strong pride of race and religion, but having all these feelings crushed back into his heart by repeated insult and persecution, brought to bay, like a hunted animal, by mental torture beyond endurance. And then, human nature awakening to every bad instinct in the thirst for revenge—a mind overwrought by the tension of this one hope for retribution. And when all fails him, when his own child deserts him, the reaction comes, and he is crushed. I cannot agree with the concluding paragraph :—“It may be willingly conceded that his interpretation of the last half of the trial scene is most picturesque, dignified, and pathetic ; but it is wholly irreconcilable with what has gone before, and therefore false. . . . The manner of the final exit would have been masterly if it had not been so incongruous.” If this is Mr. Ranken Towse’s sincere opinion, he must have studied Shakespeare very superficially, and be but a careless observer of humanity. There is nothing inconsistent or incongruous in Henry Irving’s Shylock. These strong contrasts are the very outcome of the man’s nature and position. To say there is neither true passion or genuine pathos in the rendering of the part, that the gesture was excessive and not always significant, I might have attributed to a spirit of prejudice and unfairness, had not Mr. Ranken Towse rendered Irving ample justice in other things. I can only, therefore, explain it by a strange misconception of Shakespeare’s meaning.

It is well-known that “*The Rivals*,” by Sheridan, originally produced at Covent Garden Theatre in 1775, failed on the first representation, and in several passages was treated with marked discourtesy. Sir Lucius O’Trigger was considered “a national reflection.” It is interesting to hear what Sheridan himself said on the subject, particularly as the attitude of audiences towards authors does not appear to have changed very much in the course of a hundred years :—

“With regard to some particular passages which, on the first night’s representation, seemed generally disliked, I confess that if I felt any emotion of surprise at the disapprobation, it was not that they were disapproved of, but that I had not before perceived that they deserved it. As some part of the attack on the piece was begun too early to pass for the sentence of judgment, which is ever tardy in condemning, it has been suggested to me that much of the disapprobation must have arisen from virulence of malice rather than severity of criticism ; but as I was more apprehensive of there being just grounds to excite the latter than conscious of having deserved the former, I continue not to believe that probable which I am sure must have been unprovoked. However, if it was so, and I could even mark the quarter from whence it came, it would be ungenerous to retort, for no passion suffers more than malice from disappointment. For my own part, I see no reason why the author of a play should not regard a first night’s audience as a candid and judicious friend, attending, in behalf of the public, at his last rehearsal. If he can dispense with flattery, he is sure at least of sincerity ; and even though the annotation be rude, he may rely upon the justness of the comment. Considered in this light, that audience whose fiat is essential to the poet’s claim, whether his object be fame or profit, has surely a right to expect some deference to its opinion, from principles of politeness at least, if not from gratitude.

“As for the little puny critics who scatter their peevish stricture in private circles, and scribble at every author who has the eminence of being unconnected with them, as they are usually spleen-swoln from a vain idea of increasing their consequence, there will always be found a petulance and illiberality in their remarks which should place them as far beneath the notice of a gentleman as their original dulness had sunk them from the level of the most unsuccessful author.”

Students of Shakespeare may well turn with profit and encouragement to a neat little volume, analyzing, describing, and elaborating the character of “Lady Macbeth” (Wyman & Sons, Great Queen Street). The author (or should I not rather say the authoress ?) of this admirable critical study is M. Leigh-Noel, who possesses a fine eloquent style and a command of expression. The book is far more than a study of Lady Macbeth, for it gives, in addition, an admirable idea of her guilty companion and his associates. For once we see Lady Macbeth described as a living, breathing woman, burdened with the sorrow of an awful secret, and not as a tenth-rate tragedy-queen, artificial and pompous.

Mr. Harding Cox, clever son of a celebrated father, has published, in a neat little volume, “Six Pieces for Recitation,” which are worthy the attention of the drawing-room and platform reciter. They are all of them striking and dramatic, and the author, who recites as well as he writes, has tested the strength of some of them on many an audience. “The Jockey” and “The Hunted Man” are the most original and graphic in the little selection.

On March 11, a concert, intermixed by recitation, was given at the



"Why—certainly."

THE COLONEL.

Edgar Bruce

Brompton Hospital for Consumption. These entertainments take place from time to time, for the kind purpose of bringing a little sunshine in the life of the poor patients. Outsiders are not admitted. And it must be a real source of pleasure to the amateurs who give their time and services to the amusement of the sufferers, to see their brightened faces, and to hear their hearty applause. This concert was organized by Mrs. Davidson, with the help of Miss Mary Liddell. The latter played a pianoforte solo with brilliancy; the other pianists were Mr. Claude Neville, and Mrs. Szulczewska, this lady deserving especial praise. The banjo band represented by the Countess Cowper, the Hon. Mrs. Dalrymple, Miss Mary Liddell, the Hon. Lionel Byng; Lieut.-Colonel Mackinnon and Mr. Claude Neville at the piano, played several pieces with excellent ensemble; Lieut.-Colonel Mackinnon sang two solos with much success. A bad cold unfortunately prevented the Countess Cowper from singing hers. Mr. A. Vincent was in very good voice. Mr. Alfred Scott Gatty created much laughter by his comic songs. The reciters were Mr. L. D. Powles, who gave a quaint rendering of a "Bab Ballad" and a "Yankee Story;" Mr. Warburton, who was very good, but above his audience, in Calverley's "Sad Memories;" and Mdlle. Marie de Mensiaux, who recited "Her Letter," by Bret Harte. Mrs. Davidson charmed all hearers with three songs; her splendid touching voice is often heard by the poor invalids; and they know how to appreciate her unwearying kindness. At the close of the concert a vote of thanks to the performers was proposed and heartily responded to on the part of the patients.

The members of the "Sunnyside Bee" Society, who meet and perform at the residence of Mrs. Adams-Acton, 8, Langford Place, N.W., gave some theatricals on Tuesday and Wednesday, March 18 and 19, in aid of Mrs. Gladstone's Convalescent Home. The performances, thanks to the hearty co-operation of all concerned in them, were, both artistically and financially, entirely successful. "Meg's Diversion," the first piece presented, showed Mr. Barton Baker to advantage as Jasper Pidgeon. Mr. Upton was amusing as Eytem, the lawyer, and Mr. L. D. Powles was good as Jeremy Crow; Mrs. Francillon was effective as Meg; and Miss Alice Burrell, as Camelia, found much favour with the audience. In "The Ladies' Battle," which followed, Mrs. Theodore Wright gave an excellent impersonation of the Countess, and Mdlle. Marie de Mensiaux, as Léonie, was charmingly natural, and gave in other respects a capital rendering of the part. Mr. Brandon Thomas, who stage-managed the comedy, was a capital Henri de Flavigneul; and Mr. Powles as the Baron, and Mr. Gotch as Gustave, were also of good service to the play.

Mr. Edgar Bruce made his first appearance in 1868, on the stage at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Liverpool, where he acted for a season, and on August 30 of the following year he made his *début* in London, at the Strand Theatre, as Château Renaud, in a burlesque called "The Pilgrim of Love." During the next two years he played many parts in the country; and, in August, 1871, he joined the Wyndham comedy company in America, and in this combination he acted leading characters

throughout the United States and Canada. In the Robertsonian plays he impersonated at this time: George d'Alroy and Captain Hawtree, in "Caste;" McAlister and Hugh Chalcot, in "Ours;" and Lord Beaufoy, in "School." Returning to London, he became a member, in March, 1873, of the company of the Court Theatre, where he remained for some time. He entered upon an engagement at the St. James's Theatre in March, 1875; and in June of the same year the Haymarket Theatre was opened for a season of six weeks under his management. On February 21, 1876, he opened the Globe Theatre with the dramatic version of Dickens's novel, "Bleak House," entitled "Jo," which secured a long run. During the ensuing season he brought out at the same theatre a drama entitled "Cora." In the spring of 1878 he played Mr. Charles Wyndham's original part, Charles Greythorne, in "Pink Dominoes," at the Criterion Theatre. He then went on tour with the late George Honey to play Belvawney in Mr. Gilbert's "Engaged."

On Easter Monday, April 14, 1879, Mr. Bruce opened the Royalty Theatre for a summer season, producing Mr. George R. Sims's comedy, "Crutch and Toothpick." He appeared in this play as Guy Devereux. He also brought out here "Nicette," an operetta by Mr. Edward Rose, on June 2, and "Venus," a burlesque, by Messrs. Edward Rose and Augustus Harris, on June 27. On February 2, 1881, Mr. Bruce, having taken over the lease of the Prince of Wales Theatre, produced there Mr. Burnand's comedy, "The Colonel." He also acted the title-rôle in one of his provincial companies. The run of the play was brought to a close at the Prince of Wales Theatre, with its five hundred and fiftieth performance, on July 24, 1882. At Abergeldie, on Tuesday, October 4, 1881, he had the honour of acting before the Queen as the Colonel. He opened his new theatre, the Prince's, in Piccadilly, on January 18, with Mr. Gilbert's comedy, "The Palace of Truth." On March 3 he produced there the drama, "Breaking a Butterfly," by Messrs. H. A. Jones and Henry Herman.

A faithful friend to THE THEATRE, Mr. M. H. Spielmann, writes as follows:—

"The subjoined letter from M. Regnier, of the Théâtre Français, will probably interest your readers, proving as it does that M. Jules Sandeau is not the sole author of 'Mdlle. de La Seiglière'—of the play, at least,—as has hitherto been thought."

"Paris, 11, Rue Ventadour,
"Nov. 7, 1851.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I would not have, for some particular reasons, my name on our playbill for "Mdlle. de La Seiglière," of which I am the author, with my friend Jules Sandeau; we have just sold our manuscripts to a bookseller (M. Lévy), and to the newspaper *La Presse*, and a rough copy only remains in my hands, from which it would be possible for you to have the transcript which you wish to have.

"I cannot give you the copy of the prompter, which is useful to our printer for the indications of the scenery.

"I hold this rough copy at your disposal, but I am afraid it will be of

little use to you, as the *Presse* is to begin the publication of our comedy in its columns Monday next, which will be terminated at the end of the week.

“ ‘Decide, my dear sir, what is the best for you, and believe me,

“ ‘Yours sincerely,

“ ‘REGNIER.

“ ‘Pardon my bad English.’ ”

I have received the following letter from the Honorary Secretary of the Bedford Park Amateur Dramatic Club :—

“ The following advertisement appeared in the *Era* of February 23 :—
 ‘ “The Millionaire” and “The Parvenu,” by G. W. Godfrey. Amateurs desiring to perform these comedies should apply to the author. N.B. An authorized performance of “The Parvenu” is said to have taken place recently at Bedford Park. Any person who will furnish the author with particulars of this performance will be rewarded.—84, Gloucester Crescent, Hyde Park.’ ”

“ I cannot answer for what may have taken place at other Bedford Parks, but no performance, authorized or unauthorized, of ‘The Parvenu,’ or of any of Mr. Godfrey’s plays, has ever taken place at Bedford Park, Chiswick.

“ Your obedient servant,

“ RICHARD C. P. GETHIN.”

Last month, in a genial letter, Mr. Heneage Mandell suggested the formation of a club, to discuss matters of general interest in the theatrical world. No sooner said than done ; for I have now before me a prospectus of “The Playgoers’ Club,” for which a temporary home has been secured at 266A, Strand. But perhaps I had better, in the interest of many readers, give the prospectus as it stands :—

THE PLAYGOERS’ CLUB.

266A, STRAND, W.C.

President.

Committee.

ADDISON BRIGHT, ALBERT E. COOMBS, HENRY GRAY, WILLIAM TARRAN,
 EDWIN H. SHEAR, FRANCIS B. SHEAR, MISS HOGG.

Treasurer.

ARTHUR W. COOMBS, 167, Liverpool Road, N.

Hon. Secretary.

HENEAGE MANDELL, 149, Ladbroke Grove Road, W.

PRELIMINARY RULES.

1. That the society be called “The Playgoers’ Club.”
2. That its objects be to afford members facilities for critical and theatrical discussion, by holding weekly meetings in the form of a debate.

3. That its officers consist of a president, a treasurer, and secretary, together with a committee of seven members.

4. That the meetings be held on Tuesday evenings, from 7.30 to 10.30 P.M., at 266A, Strand.

5. That the subscription for the preliminary three months be half-a-crown.

6. That candidates for election be proposed and seconded at any ordinary meeting of the club, and balloted for at the following meeting; the acceptance by three-fourths of the members then present to constitute election.

7. That visitors may be introduced once, but be not allowed to take any part in the debate.

8. That these rules stand for three months.

9. That upon a requisition, signed by ten members, and delivered to the secretary, a special general meeting shall be called; the secretary to give seven days' clear notice of such meeting.

Ladies and gentlemen, being playgoers, and desirous of joining the club, should communicate with the hon. secretary.

RULES FOR DEBATE.

1. That all subjects brought forward for debate be strictly confined to theatrical topics.

2. That the first subject to be introduced at all ordinary meetings be the most important play that has been produced during the previous week. That other theatrical subjects be taken in the order in which they are given to the secretary.

3. That the opener and first opposer of every discussion be allowed ten minutes each; the succeeding speakers five minutes each; the opener to be allowed five minutes for reply.

4. A division to be taken when demanded.

5. That before the close of every meeting, the chairman for the ensuing debate be nominated by a member of the committee, subject to the approval of the members then present.

I have received from Mr. Brander Matthews a pamphlet of correspondence, proving incontestably his right to the sole invention and authorship of "*Margery's Lovers*." No one doubted the word of so honourable and respected a writer. These charges, when tested, usually prove worthless and frivolous. The play having failed at the outset, it was scarcely worth while to demand a share in the misfortune.



THE THEATRE.



Show and its Value.

BY GODFREY TURNER.

VERY recently I was permitted to give a few reminiscences of the scenery, dresses, and decorations by which, in a period of about twenty years—roughly speaking between '45 and '65, with a fringe at either end—a salutary reform was wrought on the English stage, and a great advantage conferred on the representation of the higher class of drama. My survey was advisedly not brought down to the times present. This would have been useless as well as being altogether apart from the object of memorizing. The former chapter broke off at a point where, according to a sort of promise, I now begin. We are re-assembled at the Princess's Theatre, in Charles Kean's time and prime, to see him play Cardinal Wolsey, which is not much ; to see his wife, a perfect actress, but now beyond her time and prime, play Queen Katharine, which is a great deal ; to see the best Henry VIII. perhaps ever represented on the modern English stage in Walter Lacy ; and to see—which is more germane to the matter at present under consideration—the most splendid revival, scenically and historically considered, ever placed before gods and groundlings. What a revelation of Tudor times, of Titanic state-craft, of the turbulence and strength of human passion and human intellect which generated the men of the next age—the age of Elizabeth and Shakespeare ! For me this play of "Henry VIII.," with all its manifest and glaring faults, with its furious violation of the unities, for example, in covering a period of twelve years without hint of break or pause, and with its flat contradiction of then recent and palpable history, in bringing about the death of Katharine before the birth of Elizabeth, is the play of plays to sit out from first to last, and to provoke lamentation when, as too frequently happens now-a-days, it is coolly

announced to "terminate with the fall of Wolsey." A much finer Wolsey than Charles Kean, histrionically regarded—for indeed neither of the twain realized in person and aspect the coarse, crafty ecclesiastic—was Macready, who had preceded Kean on the same boards under the parsimonious management of Mr. Maddox, and had chafed and growled after his savage wont at the extraordinary shabbiness of that *impresario*.

It was quite a revelation of the play's spectacular capability when Kean and his council of taste took it in hand. Written in an age of masques and pageants; written, it may be, if the older commentators were justified in their dates, to please Elizabeth, who delighted in such entertainments; written—whether or not in great part by Fletcher scarcely concerns us now—with deliberate purpose of pageantry, and even with some considerable sacrifice of dramatic interest (as in the fifth act) to that purpose, "Henry VIII." was really marked out above all plays for the hand of the modern antiquary and restorer. We had seen "Henry VIII." at the Princess's in a cheap edition, so to speak; and the difference that ensued was like casting aside a cheap, meanly-printed, common, "mechanical, salt-butter" book, to take up and to handle with dainty reverence a rare folio, choice in typography, rich in costly illumination, and sumptuous in outward glory of vellum and gold. This opens no question of the actual performance. Charlotte Cushman was an excellent Katharine to Macready's Cardinal. Cooper, as King Hal, was conventionally indifferent, if not bad. Ryder was the most impressive Buckingham I ever saw. On the whole, Macready's and Kean's companies struck an even balance in the acting of this play.

Accessory in no small degree to the archæological impressiveness of Kean's reproduction was the Elizabethan music. When the conductor of the orchestra, Mr. Hatton, the merry little fat grey man, took his high stool, and beamed right and left at his musical myrmidons and at the audience who welcomed him with hand-clappings, it was to strike into a characteristic overture, which in part was his own composition, and which so learnedly caught the spirit of the quaint, honest Tudor tunes, that these seemed new, and his freshly written melodies old. Where is that overture now? Was it published, I wonder? Will *Notes and Queries* take up the question, and procure me an answer—and a copy? You will not expect or desire me to go scene by scene

through the play. Let me say again, and crave indulgent consideration for the truth, that my reminiscences are no other than they pretend to be. I consult no playbills, take down no books ; and so, drawing on memory—a deceiver at the best, if not a bankrupt—I am very likely wrong in some of my random recollections. But, heartily hating inaccuracy, I at least think myself sure of what I write before writing it. The reality of the council-chamber was the first thing that struck me pictorially in the representation of “ Henry VIII.” at the Princess’s ; and the quick official entrance of the Lord Chamberlain, bustling but noiseless, was the next. Mr. David Fisher, who played this little part, must have taken a lesson from the life of Courts, so entirely different was his demeanour from the solemn theatrical stalk seen nowhere off the stage. The Cardinal’s presence-chamber in York Place was the next remarkable scene, and it exemplified very successfully a principle of stage perspective which Charles Kean was first to bring before the public. The back scene was diagonally set, so that the chamber, hall, street, quay, terrace, or open country was indefinitely extended. A peculiarly happy effect was thus obtained in the case of this splendid interior, the arrangement enabling a full realization of the spectacular stage directions for the entrance of the king and his companions, habited like shepherds—conventionally and superbly, that is to say—and wearing masks of thin beaten gold. A band of drums and fifes, in glittering uniform, punctiliously authentic, preceded the royal party, playing aloud, with shrill emphasis and a rolling, rattling accompaniment, one of those same old tunes revived by Mr. Hatton. The sixteen torch-bearers and all the quaint particulars of King Henry’s heathen-pastoral masque, as minutely chronicled by Wolsey’s biographer, Cavendish, were conjured up in bodily exactness and with as much splendour, probably, as in the royal pageant itself. As I briefly remarked in the preceding paper on this subject, a painstaking effort to follow in the footsteps of Charles Kean was made a few years back at Manchester by Mr. Charles Calvert, who himself played Wolsey with an able grasp of the character as Shakespeare modelled it. That this representation fell below Charles Kean’s standard of magnificent archæology may be said without offence. But all the illustrative decorations were well ordered, excepting in one of the details, where a confusion seemed to have been caused by mistake of the term “ vizor ” or “ visard,” in some account of this

or a similar masque. No other vizor than the vizor of a helmet apparently entered the mind of the artist who designed the dresses and their appointments. Consequently, an uncouth basket-like excrescence of gilt cane or osier, clumsily representing bars, instead of the compact gold masks in the Princess's revival, was incongruously attached to the shepherd's hats. A vizor, of course, is any kind of covering for the face, either as a disguise or as a protection ; and that a mere mask was intended, without the least relation to armour, plainly appears in a subsequent stage-direction for the vision of Queen Katharine, when the six personages clad in white robes are described as having "golden visards on their faces." Wearing those mistaken muzzles, such as are clapped on German mastiffs in the dog-days, King Hal and his merry crew appeared in a most ludicrous aspect. I may call to mind, though this is outside the record, that Miss Genevieve Ward was the Queen Katharine at Manchester, playing, I need hardly say, with tragic and queenly dignity ; and that the late William Belford followed at some distance, though not altogether unworthily, Walter Lacy in the bluff King.

Let us now get back to the pit of the Princess's, and see out the play which is generally thought by modern judges—among them Mr. James Spedding, Professors Dowden and Ingram, Mr. Robert Browning, and Lord Tennyson—to be only in the better and not the larger part Shakespeare's. With that we have nothing to do. Disturbing speculations as to "who wrote Shikspur" have no place in the pit when the curtain is up and the illusion of the hour has taken possession of our souls. Let Mr. Swinburne and Mr. Furnivall go outside, if it please them, to wrangle over questions whether this play belongs to the second or the fourth Shakespearean period ; whether it was written mainly by Shakespeare or by Fletcher ; and which of them wrote how much and what. The vision that precedes the death of Queen Katharine, at Kimbolton, is minutely detailed for the instruction of the stage-manager. It does not include a moonbeam, or flood of moonbeams, with angelic forms floating thereon like motes ; but with some new machinery from Paris—used also in the apotheosis of Margaret, at the end of "Faust"—Charles Kean set the public a-gape with wonder. It was the least worthy part of his historical revival of "Henry VIII.," but it took the general taste more than all the picturesque archæology of the play ;

and it was so well done, so absolutely perfect of its kind, that the younger readers of this page may take my word for it they cannot conceive any notion, from the clumsy copies of such mechanism in subsequent transformation-scenes and the like, how exquisitely supernatural was the effect produced. From Paris, I have said, Charles Kean got this device, as also certain others ; but in thus borrowing he did what few of his managerial countrymen have done—he improved. He spared no expense ; nor did he spare any thought or pains in expending. It may have been that he lost money even when his gain in renown was greatest. With that we have nothing here to do. Many of the best things on the stage and off it—I do not say all, or the plurality, or half, or near half, but still I repeat many—have been financial failures. Perhaps the Christmas pantomime, to which Charles Kean clung as to a strong post of the legitimate drama, paid him best. It was an elegant type of pantomime that you saw at the Princesses' ; not the solid beef and plum-pudding type of tomfoolery and tippetwitchet ; not the Harry Bolen type, or the Tom Matthews type ; but something with a touch of Auriol and Leclair about the clowning, Flexmore being indeed a son-in-law of the incomparable Auriol. From Paris came that ingenious scene in which certain rococco figures in hoops and periwigs, in brocaded coats, sacks, and farthingales, with swords and canes, and powder and patches, changed in a twinkling to a set of Pompadour furniture, elbow-chairs, couch, dressing-table with oval mirror, and all complete. There was likewise—I think in the same pantomime, but rebuke me not too sharply if I be wrong—a great head and face with mobile flesh-like features, the whole being formed of flexible parts and atoms, living as I think, all artfully thrown together. There was such completeness about every surprise on Charles Kean's stage that it really was surprising, and defied you to "tell how it was done." The trooping angels in the slant of light which poured in at the Gothic window of Katherine's room in Kimbolton Castle, were, we may reasonably guess, supported in iron frames or cradles, just as are the tinselled fairies in a transformation-scene ; but with this essential difference, that whereas we are now painfully aware of the awkward angular supports, the constrained attitudes of the supported, and the want of blended connection between figure and drapery, we could then detect no trace of mechanism or even of arrangement, all seeming

so easy and yet so inexplicable. As a matter of fact, I knew, on the second occasion of seeing Charles Kean's "Henry VIII." that the flood of light obliquely descending in Queen Katharine's chamber and peopled with white-winged angels, was not where it seemed to be—not in the room at all, but behind a transparency in the panelled wall at the back. Yet, for all my knowledge of the contrivance, the effect of prominence was the same as at first; the same as when I was ignorant of the means by which it was attained. This is the triumph of stage enchantment—to retain the admiration of those who are in the secret; to preserve the illusion for eyes enfranchised and on the watch for trick, blemish, or failure. A comparison honourable to both between the different systems of Phelps and Kean seems to me necessary to point the moral that should govern shows, as well as other matters—that is, to attempt as much as, and no more than, our means will enable us to accomplish. Economy was imperative in the management of Sadler's Wells, yet by tact and taste, by judgment and ingenuity, I have seen things done that were so striking as to be remembered for years afterwards, and indeed to be remembered now. Whether the stage-show be for the illustration of a poetical play or for the non-intellectual amusement of holiday-makers and children, the same rule holds good. Phelps, like Kean, clung to pantomime as the legitimate Christmas entertainment; following generally, at the Wells, some dull or mediocre play, such as "Jane Shore," "Douglas," "Venice Preserved," or "The Stranger." His pantomimists, such as the Stilt family, were members of his stock company, and waxed sleek and proud on extra pay in the cheery Christmas time. It provokes a smile to think of the difference between the mounting of pantomimes at Sadler's Wells and at the Princess's. But my point is this, that both alike, not one more than the other, were efficient. Nothing can be more; and how often, with great pretence and abortive expenditure, do injudicious showmen give us less than efficiency! Some of my readers may remember Ducrow, the successor of Astley at the amphitheatre named after its founder. As for Ducrow, he had the instinct of poetical management, and this instinct supplied the place of culture. He may have been, as reputed, an ignorant man, though I suspect more than three-fourths of the tales told about him to be such myths as grow round about any hero or heroine of ignorance.

We make those giants first, and then we slay them with the two-edged sword of ridicule. Ducrow, besides being the poet of the circus, was a man of innate taste and genius for spectacle and for stage beauty. Fitzball's trash of "Mazeppa" was raised to pictorial merit by Ducrow. The fountain in the desert, with the wild ass and the antelope, the camels and the resting caravan, was a little poem on the stage, since vulgarized by an ignorance far lower than Ducrow's. Showmen who have followed him stuff the stage with a meaningless menagerie of whitewashed elephants, spotted horses, camels, dromedaries, mules, asses, clowns, and kangaroos.

I trust I may not be severely judged for mixing up matters so diverse as Shakspearean poetry, farce, pantomime, and hippodrama. Think ; we are considering stage-decoration, which is equally an adjunct of all these ; and we are looking back to the times when it was just the same whether we were taken, as to a source of pure enjoyment, of innocent juvenile delight, to—

"see the Drury Lane Dane slain ;
Or else to mark Ducrow with wide stride ride
Six horses, which no other man can span ;
Or in the small Olympic pit sit split,
Laughing at Liston while we quiz his phiz."

We have, beyond a doubt, improved the illusions of the stage by making them less stagey. It was difficult at first to break away from tradition. Read the prescriptions for costume at the beginnings of old-fashioned acting-editions, and see how ridiculously conventional they all are. Heavy old men, lovers, chambermaids, and the rest, are marked by a sort of stage-livery. Modern farce had no more of modern reality or every-day experience about it than Elizabethan tragedy or Christmas pantomime. If old Mr. Wiggins, or Percy Poppleton, or Susan Scroggs had ventured out of doors in the daytime, they, or either of them, would have been mobbed, or perchance taken to the police-station, as coming under the category of lunatics wandering at large. There was the same false idea of scenic effect and of accessory objects on the stage as there was of dress. I remember how my earliest sense of propriety was outraged by stage-banners and the conventional stage-method of carrying them. If at the age of ten I had been appointed director of a playhouse, I verily believe I should have distinguished myself as a reformer of these things. It gave me delight, at all events, when I saw them reformed even acci-

dently. Do my readers remember how flags used to be displayed by means of a scythe-like curve of cane at the top, to prevent their drooping in natural folds? Fancy this on the field of Agincourt! Fancy it on the Horse Guards' parade! How seldom does one see a looking-glass on the stage that resembles a looking-glass of the domestic pattern! The surface is generally a dull sheet of tin-foil; and sometimes, by way of making it more unmirror-like than it is, two or three streaks of blue lightning are represented as issuing obliquely from one of the top corners. The first time I ever saw a mirror rationally pictured on the stage was at the Olympic, nearly in the management of the Wigans. The scene was an ordinary middle-class sitting-room, as common-place and free from artistic pretence as the spirit of 1855 could make it. The fireplace was at the back of the stage, so that the chimney-glass boldly faced the front of the house. Now, to have had a real mirror would have been absurdly wrong—indeed, totally impracticable. Most managers would have resorted to our blind old friend, the tinfoil substitute. Not so Alfred Wigan, who had a genius for detail, and directed his scene-painter to ignore the auditory and to imagine a fourth side of the room. There was, as I remember, a red flock paper of the period on the walls of this Philistine chamber, and the looking-glass merely showed a repetition of the pattern, reduced in size and in vividness of hue by the imaginary perspective. It was a bit of most satisfactory realism, so quiet and truthful as to pass unobserved by many spectators, as I found by questioning those of my own acquaintance. Yet this reminiscence has its contrast in one which I will cite. It may serve as an example of the almost inveterate habit of evasion, in the pretended realism of the stage, that when Alfred Wigan appeared *in propria personâ* in the *pièce de circonstance*, "The Camp at the Olympic," written by Planché for the entrance of Mr. and Mrs. Wigan on their new enterprise, and when "the bare stage" was supposed to be first shown, it was only a *stage* ideal of a bare stage that we saw; while the lessee and manager, appearing *as* the lessee and manager, disguised himself with a wig. Nothing could have been easier, one would suppose, than to present the bare stage as a reality, with a real live manager just out of Wych Street. And yet, you see, the thing was so untheatrical that it could not be done.

The shows on the theatrical boards demand the same quality

and degree of taste, whether Shakspeare, or Grimaldi, or Maddison Morton be the genius of the display. As a discriminative critic and poet once said, "There's an art in pies ; in raising crusts as well as galleries." Architect and pastrycook alike are bound by laws, canons, and principles, which they neglect at the peril of judgment. Charles Kean paid great attention to the grouping of his plays ; and if dances were introduced they were always picturesque and characteristic. Often there was a wildness in them which banished the ordinary idea of artificial training and collective drill. Mr. Cormack, who was a child and pupil himself (Frampton being his preceptor) when I saw him first as a little satyr in a Bacchanal ballet at the Lyceum, was now the ballet-master. He showed himself a Napoleon of pantomime—or at least a Lannes ; and perhaps this is nearer the mark, Charles Kean himself being the Napoleon of stage-grouping, always with a wisely chosen army-leader. They had the great advantage of attacking an inartistic period, so to speak, in rear, and with the material re-enforcement of improved popular knowledge and taste. The old, stupid, conventional ideas of costume were in full retreat, and a fresh force of picturesque fancy and imagination, sympathizing earnestly with the historic past, was marching to the front. You have only to think of the pictorial art of that time, to match the Royal Academy with the theatre, and to call to mind how matters stood between them. Mediævalism was reviving, and had touched the age with tints of the older painters. The Pre-Raphaelite movement was a new power, and the stage was not slow to feel it. Only a few years earlier, Macready and Maclise being contemporaries, the most benighted conceptions of historical art misled the many. The picturesque actor and theatrical painter had false models in view. Stage illustration now-a-days is leagues ahead of both ; and it had, indeed, got well in advance just when Macready had left the stage clear for Charles Kean, and the false, mannered, lifeless presentments drawn by Maclise from the masquerade-warehouse were being swept from recollection by Millais and Holman Hunt. Whether the acting is changed for the better by improved conditions of stage-arrangement I offer no opinion here ; or, if I hint any, it is merely this—that precise accuracy of embellishment, if it do not improve good acting, can hardly make bad acting worse. That I hold the actor and the manager apart, in

considering the uses of well-directed show, must be seen in the fact that I have in my judgment set Macready far above Kean ; but Kean's historical grouping and appointments, aided as they were by new lights of pictorial art, far above Macready's.

There comes another modern innovator in scenic method for our present consideration. Fechter introduced a system more original—I will not say more effective—than the system of Phelps, or than the system even of Kean. Phelps did his best, laboriously and honestly, to adorn the many plays he put upon the stage, using the best means at his command. Often great ingenuity was shown in the production of particular effects ; but it can hardly be said that Phelps attempted any new plan of scenic arrangement—any positive system of his own. He was a reformer undoubtedly, and the chief of all in the whole range of theatrical history ; for, in producing more plays of the highest order than any other manager, he reformed more vicious customs in restoring the integrity of texts and in banishing unwarrantable interpolations. And he caught the spirit of historical accuracy, in costume and surroundings, before any help could come to him, as it came to Kean, from authorities who had made public the result of their antiquarian investigations. The scholarly Henry Marston was, I believe, the sole support on which Phelps rested for the establishment of a novel and startling theory of costume for “*Macbeth*.” The ridiculous tartans had kept the stage till they were banished by the management of Sadler's Wells. I claim for Phelps that he led the enterprise taken up by Kean, to whom the lion's share of glory was given in those days. But Kean, in the mere disposition of scenery, was more of an originator than Phelps. We have remarked that peculiarity of perspective, the oblique background, first introduced at the Princess's, and repeated, in a modified form, in many of the admirable interiors built upon the stage by Henry Irving. The last scene of “*Much Ado About Nothing*” was arranged quite after the principle apparent in Charles Kean's system. Now, let us regard Fechter's totally different method of setting scenes. His main idea was to carry across the middle of the stage some species of rampart, for which the excuse was often hard to find, though he generally found it. Behind this low scene, reaching seldom above the middle of the human figure, a second row of footlights was placed, easily at disposal for modifying the light on

the farther scene, which gave the distance. Then Fechter had an arrangement of his own invention at the wings, which dispensed with the old cumbrous method of sliding scenery on and off the stage. After his time, this device was copied usefully at the Alhambra, where, from the want of room at the sides, it was necessary to adopt some contrivance by which the wings should be made to revolve. The plan is again to be seen at the Prince's Theatre, where the wings are set on poles as masts, which turn in a socket. This is not by any means a necessity of Mr. Bruce's new stage, which boasts unusual space on either side, behind the proscenium-wall. But, I need hardly say, neither at the old Alhambra, nor at the new theatre in Coventry Street named the Prince's, has Fechter's general principle of scene-setting been followed. It was to do a great deal, as Fechter promised; but it has done nothing, and is now obsolete. Not so his reformation of costume, especially in "Hamlet," which effectively drove into exile the funereal furniture of black velvet and ostrich feathers. As I began, so shall I end—by declaring that the three great theatrical reformers, so far as the purpose of introducing appropriate scenery, dresses, and decorations is concerned, have been Phelps, Charles Kean, and Fechter; these having contributed to bequeath an example which the most enlightened managers of the present day are now intelligently, and, I will add, freely following.



Marie Dorval.

By CHARLES HERVEY.

IN 1830, the struggle for supremacy between the partisans of classical and romantic drama in Paris was at its height, the leading champions of the new school being Bocage and the heroine of the present sketch. Some day, perhaps, I may have an opportunity of alluding to the former, a very old and valued friend of mine, and unrivalled in his peculiar line; but "place aux dames" being the obligatory motto of a gallant chronicler, and no authentic biography, as far as my knowledge goes, existing of the great actress whose name heads this paper, I make no apology for

grouping together in a connected form whatever reliable particulars I have succeeded in gleaning either from published or unpublished sources concerning her.

Marie Dorval (whose real name was Delaunay, or, as some assert, Bourdais) was born at Lorient in 1792, and commenced her dramatic career, in her nineteenth year, at Bayonne, where the officers of the garrison, with whom she soon became an especial favourite, nicknamed her "Little Boulotte." In 1818 she appeared for the first time in Paris, at the Porte St. Martin, in an adaptation of Richardson's "Pamela," and ere long worked her way from the fag-end to the head of the company, which counted at that date among its principal members Potier and Jenny Vertpré. She remained at this theatre twelve years, during which, side by side with Frédéric Lemaître and Bocage, she participated in most of their successes; and by her creations of Amélie in "Trente ans," and Adèle d'Hervey in "Antony," established herself in the opinion of the public as the only living actress capable of worthily interpreting the productions of the "romantic" school. On the return of Mdlle. Georges from Russia, and the accession of Harel to the management of the Porte St. Martin, Madame Dorval, or, as she was usually called since her marriage with Allan, a second-rate actor of the Gymnase, Allan-Dorval,* declined to renew her engagement, on the rational plea that two leading actresses in the same theatre would be one too many, and transferred her services for a short period to the Ambigu; after which she started on a provincial tour, and only returned to Paris in 1834.

On April 21 of that year she appeared at the Théâtre Français in "Une Liaison," a semi-comedy, semi-drama by no means calculated to exhibit her powers in a favourable light; she was subsequently seen to more advantage in "La Mère et la Fille," and as Marguerite Cogni in Ancelot's "Lord Byron à Venise." The main object, however, of the manager in engaging her was the proposed revival of "Antony," a renewal of its original vogue being reasonably anticipated; but this project was not destined to be realized. No sooner had Dumas's drama been announced in the bills than a portion of the press, and more particularly the

* Some years after the death of her first husband, she became the wife of the dramatist Merle, author of "Le Monstre et le Magicien," adapted from Mrs. Shelley's "Frankenstein," in which Mr. T. P. Cooke was specially engaged for the part of the Monster. This union was by no means a happy one, and a separation by mutual consent ultimately took place.

Constitutionnel, deprecated its reproduction as "an outrage against morality and common decency," and caused the censor to forbid the performance. Upon this, Madame Dorval published a letter in the leading journals, stating that "Antony," having been already played fifty nights at the Porte St. Martin and thirty nights at the Odéon, could in no wise be regarded as a novelty, and ought not therefore to be subject to the caprice of a censor. That functionary, however, apparently thought otherwise, for he persisted in his *veto*, and the rehearsals of "Antony" were at an end.

To console her for this disappointment, Alfred de Vigny, one of her fervent admirers, entrusted her with the part of Kitty Bell in his drama of "Chatterton," first performed on February 12, 1835; a creation which afforded her ample scope for the display of that genuine pathos, the effect of which was so irresistible. Nine weeks later, Victor Hugo's "Angelo, tyran de Padoue" furnished her with an opportunity of measuring her talent with that of Mdlle. Mars; the simultaneous appearance in one piece of the two great actresses of the day, and the contrast between the soft and silvery tones of La Tisbé and the passionate impetuosity of Catarina were alike attractive to playgoers and beneficial to the treasury, the receipts of the fourteen first representations having exceeded sixty thousand francs.

And yet, notwithstanding her apparently brilliant position, Madame Dorval never felt completely at home at the Comédie Française; like Bocage, a declared enemy to tradition, she could neither appreciate nor understand the respect manifested by those around her for certain set forms of accentuation and delivery, simply because they had been adopted and handed down by the actors of a bygone age. She was nothing if not impulsive, and above all natural; and the strict attention to conventional correctness both of tone and gesture, which was looked upon by her fellow artists as obligatory, was inexpressibly repugnant to her; on the other hand, her comrades were perpetually on tenter-hooks, lest, carried away by her enthusiasm, she should at any moment overstep the prescribed line of classical decorum, and introduce into the house of Molière even the faintest reminiscence of her boulevard extraction. With such different ideas, it was impossible that things could go on well; disputes and misunderstandings continually arose, and it was a relief to both parties

when the close of her engagement allowed her to withdraw from a theatre where her very qualities had proved an obstacle to her success. A letter, now before us, addressed by her to the controller of the affairs of the society, complains bitterly of the neglect shown her whenever she applied for the free admissions to which she was entitled, the places allotted to her being so bad that she was unable to offer them to any one. Profiting, therefore, by the excitement caused by the *début* of Mdlle. Rachel, and rightly judging that the growing popularity of classical tragedy augured ill for the disciples of the romantic school, she signed a contract with the manager of the Renaissance, and appeared there November 7, 1839, as Louise, in "Le Proscrit," a powerful drama by Frédéric Soulié.

Unfortunately, that ill-starred establishment was then on its last legs; the director, M. Anténor Joly, whose ambition had led him to attempt a combination of every possible dramatic speciality, even including opera and ballet, and who had crippled his resources by the engagement of a far too numerous company, was compelled a few months later to abandon what had been from the outset a disastrous speculation, and to close his doors, leaving his actors to shift for themselves. It was during her connection with this theatre that Madame Dorval, while exerting her utmost powers one evening to overcome the lethargy of a thin and apathetic audience, remarked in a box near the stage a lady, whose features she was unable to distinguish, but who evidently followed her performance with the deepest interest, and applauded her so persistently that the whole house gradually caught the infection, and the curtain finally descended amid a hurricane of applause. Scarcely had the actress reached her dressing-room, when she was surprised by the abrupt entrance of her unknown admirer, who, without a word of apology, embraced her cordially, exclaiming, "How happy you are to be able to act as you have done to-night." Something in the tone and accent of her visitor struck Madame Dorval as being familiar to her. "Who, then, are you?" she asked. "Do you not know me?" replied the other; "my name is Malibran."

Our heroine's next engagement was at the Odéon, where, once more supported by her old ally, Bocage, she mainly contributed to the success of "Lucrèce," "La Main droite et la Main gauche," and "La Comtesse d'Altenberg;" and in 1845 returned to the Porte St. Martin, signaling her re-appearance there by, perhaps,

the most perfect of all her artistic efforts—namely, “Marie Jeanne.” Her last creation of any note was Agnès de Meranie in Ponsard’s tragedy at the Odéon. From that time, with the exception of a few performances at the Théâtre Historique, and a brief engagement at the Théâtre St. Marcel, her Parisian career may be said to have closed, the last eighteen months of her life having been spent in a provincial tour. Early in May, 1849, “an application was made by some of the most eminent literary men in France, including Victor Hugo, Dumas, and Janin, to M. Léon Faucher, then Minister of the Interior, warmly advocating her re-engagement at the Théâtre Français, where she had not appeared for seven or eight years. Scarcely had their petition been delivered when news arrived of the sudden and severe illness of the celebrated artist at Caen ; and, a few days later, of her return to Paris almost in a dying state. The consequences of this imprudent step were, as might be expected, fatal ; and on Sunday, May 20, she breathed her last, regretted, not only by her friends—and they were many—but by all who still cherished a recollection of her extraordinary talent.”

Shortly after her death, an article appeared in a periodical work, the following extract from which gives an accurate description of this remarkable woman : “However carefully we may examine the contemporary theatrical annals of France, or any other country, we shall rarely meet with an artist better qualified, in a physical point of view, to cope with the exigencies of the modern dramatic school than Madame Dorval. With no pretension to refined elegance of manner, or to studied purity of diction—relying for effect not on the classic suggestions of art, but on the fervid inspirations of Nature—she was occasionally coarse, but more often sublime. A true creature of impulse, endowed with an inexhaustible fund of energy, tenderness, and enthusiasm, she could now (by one of those terrible bursts of passion which first obtained for her the appellation of *le drame incarné*) make her audience shudder and quail before her ; and now, by some exquisite and spontaneous touch of pathos, melt the most indifferent, the most stony-hearted, to tears. Her powers of endurance were such that, after sustaining the most fatiguing part, she rarely betrayed any symptom of exhaustion ; her energy seemed to increase with each succeeding act, and she was never seen to such advantage as in the closing scene.”

In private life Madame Dorval was frank, unaffected, kind-hearted, and deservedly popular. Like Mrs. Siddons, she was occasionally prone to indulge in tragedy-tones off the stage, not for the sake of effect, but from sheer force of habit; and I remember hearing the well-known novelist, Mrs. Isabella Romer, relate that, meeting her once at a *table d'hôte* breakfast at Marseilles, she happened to ask her if the eggs were fresh. "Madame," replied the actress, with a sepulchral intonation that chilled all her hearers to the bone, "ils sont détesta-a-bles!"

Two extracts from unpublished letters which have passed through my hands may be inserted here, as forming an appropriate close to the preceding sketch. The first, dated January 21, 1834, and addressed to the manager of the Théâtre Français, M. Jouslin de la Salle, assures him of her readiness to accept the part cast her in the piece of Messrs. Empis and Mazères. "When I have played it," she says, "I shall be at your disposal for Antony, and also for Clotilde, Henri Trois, and Les Enfants d'Edouard—that is to say, if Mdlle. Mars will consent to my appearing in them. In any and every case rely on my ardent wish to be of service to the Comédie Française."

Writing some years later to the author of a theatrical biography, who had submitted for her inspection the article concerning her, with, probably, a hint that on certain conditions it might be made still more flattering, she says: "I thank you for your favourable notice of my dramatic career, and subscribe with pleasure to your book in its *present* state. The further additions you allude to I must decline to accept, having no fancy for purchasing celebrity at the rate of two francs a line."

One more extract—a very short one—from a letter addressed to Alexandre Dumas from Antwerp, where she was playing in summer to empty benches. The missive contained a pen and ink sketch of the Antwerp theatre, round which a multitude of rats were represented as joyously dancing: "You are to understand by this," she says, "qu'il n'y a pas un *chat* dans la salie."



An Interior.

A SUMMER IDYLL.

A QUAIN old-fashioned room with polished floor,
 In which the sober aspect of the place
 Is mirrored clearly as the open door
 Lets in the sunlight. Many a queer old face
 Is peeping from the twisted carven chairs,
 Which, black from age, stand grimly 'gainst the wall,
 And on the mantelshelf old Worcester wares
 Seem posed regardless of a threatened fall.
 The tables, high and spindle-legged, uphold
 In bowls of china, mostly blue and white,
 Whole masses of sweet roses, red and gold
 And creamy, shaded 'neath the foliage bright.
 Two narrow bookshelves, towering and grotesque,
 Stand locked, as jealous of the ponderous tomes :
 The books to *read*, the Bible, Baxter's "Rest,"
 And "Pilgrim's Progress," find their different homes
 On chair or table, and untouched remain
 Until the Sabbath, when the fingers slim,
 Which closed them that day week, will turn again
 Each yellow page of sermon or of hymn.
 And o'er the whole a certain decorous peace—
 A trifle narrow but of perfect calm—
 Is felt to hover, and the sunbeams cease
 Their fitful dancing, as in shy alarm
 They steal in, seeking for the lovely flowers
 That in the garden yesterday they woo'd,
 And prospering in their search, the morning hours
 They rest there, gladly as a poet would.

ENVOY.

One final peep. The roses nod "Good-bye,"
 And passing o'er the threshold with my rhyme,
 I dream the ray and rosebud—*you and I*,
 And our two lives perpetual Summertime !

M. E. W.



An Evening with Marionettes.

BY A. CALTHROP.

A VISIT to a theatre is almost invariably one of the ordeals to which the typical British tourist voluntarily subjects himself, during a temporary residence in a Continental town. To the boredom of listening to high-flown sentiments or broad jokes in an unintelligible tongue—for our typical tourist understands no language but his own—the Englishman submits, with more or less grace, while, with the aid of his opera-glasses, he surveys the stage and the foreign actors and actresses, from whatever quarter of the house happens, by dint of its comparative costliness, to be counted worthy of his immediate patronage. A theatre, like a famous church or a picture gallery, is a place to be “done,” and the English tourist “does” it, with an unflinching conscientiousness characteristic of his country and his class.

I happened to spend some months of last year in Venice, and it need hardly be said that I did not go away without passing one evening, at least, at a Venetian theatre. But my visit was not made until I fondly fancied that I had acquired some command of the Italian tongue. I could point to Italian grammars, which I had often patiently thumbed, and occasionally impatiently apostrophized ; I could repeat by heart, or rather by rote, infantile stories, in which a “piccolo Roberto” or a “cativo Alfonso” posed wearisomely as example or warning ; I could give orders for dinner to Minighina, the “gouvernante” of our lodgings ; I had, on more than one occasion, called for an impromptu meal of hot chestnuts, or whipped cream, at some shop in a Calle, or on the Piazza, and I had listened in the Waldensian Church to a sermon, of which I managed to comprehend all the sense and a fair proportion of the words. I had a speaking acquaintance with a superlatively suave, and comparatively honest, proprietor of a stall on the Riva Schiavoni, and I had played, during expeditions to Venetian lions, my modest part in rather one-sided conversations with sundry gondoliers. There were Italians to be found, hardy enough to declare that I spoke “*benissimo, la lingua Italiana*,” and though I had my suspicions

of a sacrifice, in this statement, of truth to politeness, the compliment was not altogether displeasing to my British ears.

It was, then, with some confidence—not to say elation—concerning my powers as a linguist, that I consented one evening in Venice to join an English party bound for a theatre. “Let us go to the Marionettes; they are so distinctly Italian,” said one of our number, and the suggestion won instant acceptance. It so happened that none of us had ever seen Marionettes, and we all shared, in greater or less degree, the old Athenian love for “some new thing.”

The apartments in which I had, in company with some friends, established myself in Venice, were on the Riva Schiavoni, and therefore on the same side as the theatre of the Grand Canal. This being the case, and the distance being short, it was arranged that we should walk to our destination. Evening dress would have demanded a gondola, but the tyranny which in London theatres prescribes a regulation costume, is in Venice exchanged for perfect freedom. And the Teatro Minerva—the home of the Marionettes—is the cheapest, and if possible the least exacting, concerning attire of all the Venetian playhouses.

“Some people are born fashionable; some achieve fashion, and others, like your humble servant, have fashion thrust upon them,” remarked Charles Lamb to Southey, when his tailor brought him home “a new coat, lapelled, with a velvet collar.” We had, on the evening of which I write, the reverse of fashion thrust upon us, by the hours kept at the Teatro Minerva, where—to suit the convenience of children, who are its chief patronizers—performances begin at half-past six and are over at nine. We dined at the unfashionable hour of half-past five, and before half-past six were crossing the Piazza, on our way to the theatre.

The Piazza was gay as ever. The band played cheerily; the stream of promenaders flowed on incessantly; at the tables, before the Caffè Florian and the Caffè Quadri, were the usual knots of officers, civilians, foreign artists and ladies; while newsvendors moved up and down, loudly proclaiming the titles of their papers—*La Gazette*, *L'Adriatico*, *Daily News*—and coquettish flower-girls flitted from table to table with their baskets of bouquets.

We left the Piazza, crossed the bridge of S. Moise, walked some short way along the street, which boasts the original name of “March the 22nd,” and presently turned down the Calle del

Teatro, one of those characteristic Venetian streets, through which two persons can with difficulty walk abreast. The theatre was the principal object in the Calle, but it could not by any means be called a building of imposing appearance. We paid, according to universal Venetian custom, a certain sum for admittance, and then we were confronted by the problem—What places it would be advisable to take? We discovered that our entrance fee of twenty-five centessimi—twopence halfpenny—would secure us seats in the body of the theatre, where, as a hurried glance informed us, untémpting-looking benches, with a passage down the middle, supplied the place of pit and stalls. The man at the ticket office, an individual with black hair, a sallow face, and dirty hands, looked at our party, and suggested that the “Signori” should hire a private box.

We asked the price.

“One franc, fifty.”

The money was laid down—not without some self-gratulation on the smallness of the sum—and we followed an attendant, who came forward to marshal us to places.

A private box at the Marionette Theatre permits, as we found to our cost, none of its occupants to face, and only two of them to gain, a limited view of the stage. They sit *vis-à-vis*, as in an omnibus, upon hard, immovable benches, on each side of a kind of tunnel.

We stood up and looked around us. The audience was somewhat meagre. In the body of the house an old man, with a basket of *fruits glacés*—plums, oranges in quarters, cherries, grapes, dissected walnuts, chestnuts, what not?—which were spitted on small wooden skewers, and priced at a halfpenny a stick, moved about among the thinly filled benches, and occasionally exchanged some of his wares for coppers.

The orchestra—an exceptionally good one, for the place—woke up into life; then the music died away, and the curtain rose. Two Marionettes, attired in male costume, rushed, in a series of jerks, on to the stage, from opposite wings. Their stature astonished us. We had expected to find them the size of average dolls. Lo and behold! they measured at least three feet; and, as they were correctly proportioned, and as there was no ordinary mortal, beside them, to mark relative height, they deluded us into a momentary notion that they were the size of life.

A dialogue began, the voices proceeding from some mysterious elevation, from whence the wires, regulating the movements of the professing speakers, were pulled. One Marionette represented a wicked *Marchese*. He sustained the dignity of the marquise in a suit of rusty black, with a cravat tied in an ample bow under one ear ; his bushy hair, vermilion cheeks, and sweeping black moustache were objects calculated to strike awe into the breasts of commoners uninitiated in the characteristics of leading members of the peerage. His lordship gesticulated abundantly ; he waved his right arm ; he shook his head ; he sat down and rose up ; he advanced and retreated, after tireless if not dramatic fashion ; and all the time, while he moved hither and thither, and while he listened or declaimed, no change of expression came into his unblinking eyes and no particle of vermilion faded in his cheeks.

Meanwhile, how was the plot of the play developing, as the dialogue went on ? I listened intently, and found, alas ! that all my study of Italian grammar, all my reluctant acquaintance with the "piccolo Roberto" and the "cativo Alfonso," and all my attendance at the Waldensian Church, served me not one whit in my attempt to translate the speeches of the actors into my mother tongue. "These fellows talk Venetian dialect—not a syllable of Italian," exclaimed one of the members of our party, an English artist, who had lived six years in Italy, and had won some repute as an Italian scholar. I found, to my consolation, that he barely understood a word. "We ought to have gone to the Goldoni, and heard a good comedy," he went on. "There, true Italian is spoken, and we should have been at home !" Nobody present reminded the artist—for we all possessed nobility of soul—that it was he who originally proposed our visit to the Marionettes. We applied ourselves to watching the stage, and constructing out of the action of the puppets a story for ourselves. A store of material was at hand. There was the heroine, a certain "Guilietta," daughter of our first friend, the *Marchese*, who gave the title to the play ; there was her lover—poor, but worthy—whose suit was scornfully rejected by the father ; there was a vast sum of money which the *Marchese* rashly, if not obtrusively, carried about in a capacious bag ; there were handsome robbers who stole the treasure and a little girl—apparently another daughter of the *Marchese*—and who met in a cave, which, as represented on the

stage, gained for some scenic artist or another the easily won applause of the house. There was a good-natured dwarf—the wag of the piece—whose lightest word (to us incomprehensible) was received with roars of irritating, because seemingly causeless, laughter, and who by some artifice, too deep for our wit to fathom, won back the treasure and the daughter for the Marchese, demanding as compensation for his pains the bestowal of Guilietta's hand on her faithful swain. Virtue met its due reward at the close of the play, and poetical justice must have been hard to please if she was not satisfied.

The movements of the puppets and the prompt, if exaggerated, manner in which, by dint of hidden management of wires, they suited action to word and word to action, were clever enough. The whole performance was praiseworthy as a piece of mechanical skill, though it did not deserve the name of art.

But the crowning point of all was a Marionette ballet which succeeded the play. The expectancy written on the faces of the audience, before the curtain rose on the second part of the evening's performance, led us to look for something entertaining, and we were not disappointed. It was a sight to see the puppet-dancers poise themselves on one foot, and lift the other, slowly and cautiously, high in the air, pointing the toe and rounding the arms in true professional style. The impassiveness of face, which had ill-befitted the emotional Guilietta and her friends, only added a new power of amusement to the performer of a *pas de seul*. Not the steadfast tin soldier of Hans Andersen's immortal story could have been more enamoured of the charming paper-dancer than were we of the leading Marionette of the ballet. If the serious play, with its mysterious Venetian dialogue, with the redundant gesticulation, and the stolid, inartistic faces of its actors, had bored us a little, the ballet restored our drooping spirits.

"Now, confess, the dancing was very amusing," we said to our friend, the artist, as the drop-scene fell at last, and we prepared to leave the box.

"Yes, it was amusing," was the answer, delivered with a lenient smile; "but I have had enough of Marionettes—haven't you? When we go to a theatre again in Venice, let it be to the Goldoni."



Our Musical-Box.

THE CARL ROSA OPERA COMPANY.

ON Easter Monday, Mr. Carl Rosa resumed his brief annual tenancy of "Old Drury" with a powerful company, in which Madame Marie Roze replaces Madame Alwina Valleria as *prima donna assoluta*, and an orchestra of remarkable strength and executant ability. Miss Gaylord, Mr. Charles Lyall, and one or two other useful vocalists, whose names have for some years past been familiar to the public ear in connection with Mr. Rosa's enterprise, have withdrawn themselves therefrom since last year's spring season; but the vacancies thus accruing have, on the whole, been satisfactorily filled up. The position of "heroic tenor" is still most efficiently occupied by Mr. Barton McGuckin; Madame Georgina Burns has resumed her post of first "florid" soprano with undiminished powers; Messrs. Ludwig, Leslie Crotty, and Snazelle are still to be found in the parts they filled so well last year, as well as in new ones excellently suited to their several capacities; and Mr. Joseph Maas, a host in himself, has been specially re-engaged to impersonate several of his favourite characters. The additions to the company are numerous, and need not be fully recapitulated in this notice, written at the close of the first week's performances, during which no operatic novelties were produced, and only a few of Mr. Rosa's recruits were introduced to the Drury Lane public. Amongst these, however, Mdlle. Delphine le Brun and Mr. Barrington Foote were conspicuous for their finished musical and dramatic renderings of the parts assigned to them, proving themselves in every respect worthy of association with the leading operatic *impresa* of this country.

Mr. Rosa opened with "The Bohemian Girl," the homely melodies of which unsophisticated work rarely fail to draw a crowded house, despite the literary absurdities and abominations of its libretto. As might have been expected on one of the four national holidays, whatever the announcement on the bill, Drury Lane was thronged with a huge audience, well inclined to be pleased and exuberantly demonstrative in its gratitude for an excellent performance.

"Maritana"—with Madame Burns in the title-rôle; Mr. Maas, as Don Cæsar; Mr. Ludwig, as Don José; and Miss Burton (for the first time in London), as the faithful Lazarillo—was excellently given to a thronged house on the third evening of the Easter week. Thursday witnessed the revival of Mr. Mackenzie's delightful opera, "Colomba;" Madame Roze added another leaf to her laurel-wreath by a highly dramatic impersonation of the fiery Corsican damsel, and sang her music, including an effective new solo, introduced into the second act, quite charmingly. The lugubrious part of Brando Savelli was ably sustained by Mr. Foote, whose sonorous bass voice told with great effect in the concerted pieces. In the distribution

of the other rôles no change had been made since last year; I need scarcely say, therefore, that the performance as a whole was all that could be wished. Judicious "cuts"—especially that which has got rid of the tiresome and anachronistic funeral sermon, formerly preached by the Governor of Corsica at the close of the last act—have supplied compactness and added strength to a work which, I venture to prophesy, will hold its own on the lyric stage of England and Germany for many a year to come. "Mignon," represented by Clara Perry, *vice* Julia Gaylord, was the event of Friday, and scored an unquestionable success, every part being thoroughly well filled.

Mr. Rosa's principal novelty for the spring season of 1884, "The Canterbury Pilgrims," by Villiers Stanford and Gilbert a' Beckett, is looked forward to with great interest by the music-lovers of this metropolis. I have received the libretto and score, both of which reveal talent of a very uncommon order. Dr. Stanford's share of the work abounds in "continuous melody" of an extremely attractive and interesting character, but is conspicuously lacking in the sort of tunes that listeners carry away with them in their heads "after the opera is over." The orchestration is ingenious, refined, and lavishly fraught with subtle combinations of tone-colour. Mr. a' Beckett's "book" should make an agreeable sensation in literary and dramatic circles. It teems with graceful verse, frequently pervaded by true poetical inspiration, and always written with an elegant mastery of our language and a ripe knowledge of vocal requirements. I do not hesitate to signalize it as the best operatic libretto of this or any other day.

WM. BEATTY-KINGSTON.

"LA COSAQUE."

A Comic Opera, in Three Acts, by M. M. HENRI MEILHAC and ALBERT MILLAUD. Music by HERVÉ.
English adaptation by SYDNEY GRUNDY. First acted in England at the Gaiety Theatre,
Hastings, on Monday, April 7, 1884. Produced at the Royalty Theatre,
London, on the following Saturday, April 12, 1884.

Prince Gregoire	MONS. MARIUS.	Jules Primitiff	MR. HENRY ASHLEY.
Prince Feodor	MR. SIDNEY HARCOURT.	Madame Dupotin	MISS AMALIA.
Prince Cyrille	MR. H. WILLIAMS.	Mdlle. Phémie	MISS SCOTT.
Count Moleskin	MR. H. ROBINSON.	Princess Machinskoff..	MISS KATE SANTLEY.
Pierre Strogoff	MR. B. HOLMES.		

By her careful and lively production of Hervé's "La Cosaque"—the English version of which from Meilhac and Millaud's original libretto has been executed with considerable spirit and remarkable judiciousness by Mr. Sydney Grundy—Miss Kate Santley has scored a legitimate success which promises to rival that achieved some months ago by "The Merry Duchess," and has most effectually contributed to the enlivenment of an unusually bleak and dismal London spring season. She has provided a handsome and valuable setting for an imitation musical gem that sparkles brightly enough, although in itself mere paste of little intrinsic value. "La Cosaque" is presented to the public with a cast of unusual all-round excellence; the result being an exhilarating lightness of rendering that, as a rule, is a characteristic of Parisian rather than of Londonian perform-

ances. Miss Santley is one of those accomplished artists—too rare in this country—whose acting and singing alike teem with unforced gaiety. Everything she says, does, or sings upon the stage appears to be the outcome of her own quick intelligence and vivacious disposition; the assiduous study that underlies her impersonations is so cleverly concealed that art wears the semblance of Nature. In this respect a strong affinity is noticeable between herself and Mr. Henry Ashley—perhaps the only eccentric comedian of English birth who, were he transplanted to the Boulevards, would within a week establish himself as solidly in the favour of French audiences as even the inimitable Baron. Mr. Ashley's gifts and method, indeed, are instinct with French *legèreté* and airiness; his fun, in action as well as delivery, is lightsome and quaint, never, however extravagant, degenerating for a moment into grotesqueness or vulgarity. Such spontaneous and unflagging geniality as his affords a truly refreshing contrast to the laboured and spasmodic buffoonery that constitutes the chief claim—a claim, I admit, that is generally and remuneratively recognised—to popularity of more than one leading London low comedian. The third “principal” in “La Cosaque” is M. Marius, to whom a part has been assigned that gives him full scope for the display of his abilities as a delineator of human eccentricities and unconscious absurdities. Comic fury is one of this humorous actor's “strong suits;” and Prince Gregoire, the military despot entrusted with the guardianship of a self-willed and whimsical niece—the heroine of the piece—enjoys many opportunities for indulging in outbursts of impotent choler, of which opportunities M. Marius avails himself, with infinite *verve*, to elicit peal after peal of uncontrollable laughter from his audience. The subordinate *rôles* of the *vaudeville* are one and all well sustained; but, by reason of their intrinsic insignificance, call for no especial mention in this place. Miss Santley and her two brilliant colleagues have matters all their own way throughout “La Cosaque” as far as situations, lyric, and dialogue are concerned, and constitute a trefoil of talent that more than suffices to furnish a delightful evening's entertainment.

Inoffensive mediocrity characterizes M. Hervé's music in this as in the majority of his operatic works, very few of which are absolutely bad, whilst none are pre-eminently good. The songs and concerted pieces of “La Cosaque” abound in reminiscences of compositions familiar to the admirers of Auber, Offenbach, and Lecocq. They are chiefly entertaining when they most unmistakably recall well-known strains; at other moments they fall but tamely on the ear. The plot dealt with by M. Hervé, however, though slightly constructed, is not lacking in ingenuity or plausible pretexts for the introduction of comic “business.” Anna Machinskoff is an orphan heiress, wilful by nature and imperious by habit, having been carefully spoiled by everybody about her since her childhood's earliest days. When we first make her acquaintance she is a social *lionne* at St. Petersburg, utterly devoid of veneration for the exalted, or of consideration for the lowly. She banters princes and envoys extraordinary, thrashes her servants and bullies her natural protectors: her favourite pet is a lion cub, the terror of her household; she summons her attendants by pistol fire;

and is, on the whole, an exceptionally *bruyante* young person. Early in the play she is seized with a whim to visit Paris. Her guardian and near kinsmen oppose this fancy, which forthwith becomes a settled resolve, frustrating coercion by the old-fashioned expedient of an escape in disguise, under the protection of a French bagman who has called upon the wealthy young princess with samples of millinery, and, believing her to be her own maid, consents to escort her to Paris and find her employment in the *magasin de modes* for which he "travels" abroad. All this he punctually does. As a shopwoman the Cossack heiress does her best to ruin the business of Madame Dupotin (Miss Amalia), speedily bringing about her own dismissal, as well as that of her friend the bagman; who, by the way, is invested with patrician potentialities for reasons that become apparent in the *dénouement*. Anna Semionona, when her employer gives her notice, discloses her rank, buys the dressmaking business, and has her name put up over the shop-front, with the amiable purpose of humiliating her august relatives. Prince Gregoire, however, her uncle-guardian, turns up with an Imperial ukase, commanding her to marry within twenty-four hours or lose her property and title. As the decree does not specify whom she is to wed, she resolves, with more than lightning-like promptitude, to spite her family by espousing the plebeian bagman, who declines the honour of serving her as a matrimonial *pis-aller*, although he is secretly enamoured of the beautiful high-born vixen. Struck by his disinterestedness and dignified self-respect, she conceives a real passion for him, and woos him with characteristic impetuosity, even going to the length of offering to submit her fair shoulders to discipline from that emblem of Russian conjugal authority, the whip, if wielded by the object of her sudden affection. Of course, Jules Primitif, the magnanimous bagman, eventually turns out to be her cousin, and everybody is made happy, including the audience. Playgoers who want to enjoy an indefinite number of hearty laughs, to see some excellent acting, and hear Miss Santley sing at her very best, should make a point of attending at least one performance of "La Cosaque" at the Royalty Theatre.

W. B. K.

"CHILPÉRIC."

An Opera, in Three Acts. Music by HERVÉ. Adapted by H. HERSEE and H. B. FARNIE.
 Reproduced at the opening of the Empire Theatre, on Thursday, April 17, 1884.

Chilpéric	MR. HERBERT STANDING.	Casan	MISS CLARA GRAHAM.
Siegbert... ..	MR. HENRY WARDROPER.	Fana	MISS KATHERINE GARDINER.
Divitiacus	MR. WESTLAKE PERRY.	Alfred	MISS IVY WARNER.
Rigolboche	MONS. PAULUS.	Victor	MISS KATE HOWARD.
Alvarez	} THE BROTHERS TACCHI.	Raoul	MISS ADA HILL.
Bim-bom-bo		Brunchaut	MISS CLARA DOUGLAS.
Brathvan	MR. FELIX BURY.	Navette	MISS ROSÉE HEATH.
Taska	MR. LOPRESTI.	Don Nervose	MISS MATTIE WYNNE.
Toc... ..	MR. JAMES T. POWERS.	Yvonne	MISS RUTH AVONDALE.
Sieur de Gruelle	MR. HARRY PAULTON.	Hermance	MISS LINA.
Frédégonda	MIDDLE. CAMILLE D'ARVILLE.	Dona Tuberosa	MISS SALLIE TURNER.
Landry	MISS AGNES CONSUELO.	Galsuinda	MISS MADGE SHIRLEY.

It is always agreeable to chronicle a success, even when that crowning joy of theatrical managements is not based upon strictly legitimate foundations. This was pre-eminently the case with the triumphant *première*, at which I was present in the Empire Theatre on the 17th of

April. By its magnificent production of Hervé's "Chilpéric," the *impresa* of this beautiful theatre has made one of the happiest hits it has ever been my privilege to record. That the hit in question was not in any important respect the outcome of "Chilpéric's" intrinsic merits, musical or dramatic, matters little to a complacent management or a delighted public. In theatrical parlance, the revival of this extravaganza was "a great go," and by no means undeservedly so, by reason of the amusing novelties imported into it, the tasteful splendour of its *mise en scène*, and the meritorious singing and acting of all the artists, leading and subordinate, engaged for its performance. "Chilpéric" is a dull story, forlorn of action, and set to insignificant music—Offenbach and water, dispensed in mawkish draughts, now and anon faintly flavoured with Gounod drops, or essences pilfered from the laboratory of Meyerbeer. The Gallic King, who is the titular hero of the piece, has nothing of any interest to do or say, and little to recommend him to the sympathies of an audience save his amatory proclivities, which prompt him to irregularities of conduct that would be more thrilling, from a dramatic point of view, if they sometimes lightly overstepped the bounds of royal discretion. This, however, is not the case; and King Chilpéric, as a baffled Lovelace, lays himself open to be looked down upon by men and laughed at by women. In a word, he is a poor creature. The other characters in the extravaganza are no less devoid of dramatic significance or purpose than this ineffectual monarch.

The dialogue and lyrics of "Chilpéric"—that is to say, of the English version brought out at the Empire—are obviously by two or three hands; wherefore they exhibit an unevenness to which many objections might be raised were *libretti* of this character fit subjects for serious criticism. As it is, the trinity of authors—for the touch of Mr. Paulton is as plainly recognizable in the spoken words as that of Mr. Hersee in the songs, or of Mr. Farnie in the adaptation—has given us a "book" that efficiently carries out the purpose for which it was written—viz., to provide laughter by audacious puns, startling anachronisms, and more or less stinging satire upon political incidents and utterances of the day. Extravaganza is the chartered libertine of the stage; it spurns history under its twinkling feet, merrily tears "the unities" to tatters, turns chronology inside out, and ignores time, locality, and fact, with sprightly *insouciance*. When, therefore, as in "Chilpéric," Druids lend money upon watches, and are consulted respecting racing events; Gaulish despots smoke cigarettes and criticize tinned meat; and a singer from a French *café chantant* trolls lays of the week before last in the presence of a Court so ancient and so barbaric as not to have been yet converted to Christianity, the best thing an audience can do is to give its critical faculty a few hours' holiday, and laugh to its heart's content, whenever it finds anything funny enough to laugh at.

In the Empire revival of "Chilpéric" there are, however, attractions galore that have nothing to do with the "book" of that *soi-disant* "opera," and it is upon these that the management has most judiciously relied for a success which, as I have already stated, was in every way complete. Mr. Bruce Smith's scenery is incomparably beautiful. There is, in the third act, a bird's-eye view of a far-off plain, through which a placid river winds its lustrous way, that cannot fail, I think, to linger tenderly in the memory of

every lover of the picturesque who shall once have feasted his eye upon its tranquil loveliness. The costumes, so tasteful, rich and various as to baffle any attempt at description on my part, are advantageously displayed in a long succession of stately processions, lively ballets, and graceful groups—assorted with a truly artistic feeling for harmonious contrasts of colour. The episodal dancing—some of which may be mildly termed sensational, with respect to its almost unreserved display of symmetrical female charms—chorus-singing, and orchestral accompaniments, are one and all as good as they can be. As a play-goer of nearly forty years' standing, I may be permitted to observe that I have never yet seen so many really handsome and well-proportioned girls gathered together at one time upon any English or Continental stage as may be contemplated by admirers of *le beau sexe* at the Empire Theatre. The capacity to sing in tune and act intelligently is no longer as incompatible with the possession of a pretty face and fine figure as it was in the days of my youth; but the engagement of so many young ladies—two hundred or so—endowed with all these qualities is an achievement of which the Empire management may be justly proud. Its enterprising spirit has also prompted it to introduce several “variety entertainments” of a highly diverting character into the resuscitated extravaganza, such as the French songs of M. Paulus, ill-chosen but admirably delivered; a quaint, side-splitting “Vocal Act,” performed by two Italian “eccentrics,” which earned a triple *encore* on the opening night; Mdlle. Langé's intricate variations on the *cor de chasse*; bull-fight, electric and amazon ballets, each excellent in its way, more especially the second, in which novel combinations of vivid light and rich colour constitute an extremely agreeable surprise. All these accessories to the slender entity of “Chilpéric” make up an evening's amusement that can boldly challenge competition from any and every place of public entertainment throughout the length and breadth of Europe.

The episodes of a huge and heterogeneous “variety-show” like the one I have roughly sketched in the foregoing paragraph, naturally tend to relegate to the background the achievements of the “principals” in the piece thus supplemented. Frank and grateful recognition, however, is due to Mdlle. Camille d'Arville for much delightful singing and spirited acting. This gifted young lady has more than realized the rare promise she revealed in her admirable impersonation of “Cymbia,” at the Strand Theatre, a year ago, when I referred to her in the pages of THE THEATRE as “one of the most sympathetic songstresses of the day.” Her voice has since that time gained in power and flexibility; her vocalization and tone-production are unexceptionable; and her pronunciation of our difficult language is far better than that of many native singers. As Chilpéric, Mr. Herbert Standing was the *beau-ideal* of a handsome, debonnair, and merry monarch. Even those who have closely watched his brilliant career as a comedian, and admired his vivacious versatility, were surprised at the complete success of his “new departure” in the vocal line. Mr. Standing's voice is a light baritone of extremely pleasant quality. He sings perfectly in tune, and no less sympathetically than vigorously. His appearance (in the first act on a cream-coloured charger), in the gorgeous costumes assigned to the King of the Gauls, was simply dazzling. Mr. Paulton

spoke his own "funniments" with the saturnine *aplomb* and excellent distinctness which always render his comic utterances so paramountly telling, and his by-play, more particularly in conjunction with that of Miss Sallie Turner, was inimitably droll. I have seldom seen Mr. Paulton in a part that fitted his humoristic peculiarities more exactly than that of De Gruelle, Chilpéric's Minister, or rather Ministry—for this functionary unites in his ludicrous person all the high offices of the State. One of his happiest thoughts is the employment of a Spanish vocabulary, culled from the brands on the cigar-boxes, in conversing with a lusty Castilian duenna. The subordinate parts are well sung and acted by Mdles. Consuelo, Graham, Gardiner, Douglas, and Shirley; and Messrs. Wardroper, Perry (a grand old arch-Druid), and Powers.

A notice of the Empire *première* would be unjustifiably incomplete did it omit to pay tribute of praise to the architectural and decorative beauties of the new theatre, and to the luxurious character of the accommodation it offers to the public. The auditorium is a *chef-d'œuvre* of form and colour; the *foyer* unquestionably the most gorgeous *tabagie* in London, fully entitled to rank on equal terms, as far as its artistic adornments are concerned, with the magnificent *foyers* of the Paris and Vienna Opera Houses; the exits are so numerous, broad, and handy, that the house, though a larger one than the Lyceum, can be cleared in five minutes without putting on agony-pressure; every numbered seat commands a good view of the stage; and the pittites have been the object of special consideration. The only drawbacks that struck me were the prevalence of a fiendish draught in the stalls, and the impossibility of hearing the words, sung or spoken, in the central portion of the dress and upper circles, though no lack of distinctness in enunciation could be laid to the charge of the performers. The size of the stage may be appraised from the circumstance that it was not inconveniently thronged at a moment when 400 persons were picturesquely grouped upon its boards. In conclusion, I take leave to record my conviction, that the Empire is a valuable addition to the recreative resources of this metropolis, and in every respect worthy of public patronage.

W. B. K.

"DICK."

A Comic Opera, in Two Acts. Libretto by ALFRED MURRAY. Music by EDWARD JAKOBOWSKI.
Produced at the Globe Theatre on Thursday, April 17, 1884.

Alderman Fitzwarren	MR. J. L. SHINE.	Dick Whittington	MISS CAMILLE DUBOIS.
Blobbs	MR. F. H. LAYE.	Princess Badoura	MISS GLADYS HOMFREY.
Hobbs	MR. DE LANGE.	Bulbul	MISS L. ALLEN.
The Emperor of Morocco	MR. C. CARTWRIGHT.	Zobeide	MISS VIOLET LESLIE.
Jack Joskins	MR. CHARLES LYALL.	Fatima	MISS ALICE HOLT.
Landlord	MR. W. GUISE.	Miss Priscilla Skeggs	MISS EWELL.
Edgar	MISS HETTY CHAPMAN.	Edith	MISS GEORGIE GREY.
Albert	MISS K. BELLINGHAM.	Maude	MISS V. NOAD.
Hassan	MR. W. WARDE.	Blanche	MISS F. HARCOURT.
		Alice Fitzwarren	MISS ETHEL PIERSON.

"Dick," a fanciful and exceedingly funny version of the memorable career of Richard Whittington, thrice Lord Mayor of London, has turned out a shining success upon its own merits, although the latter have not been as cordially or unanimously recognized by the metropolitan press as they

deserve to be. It is a gay and brilliant little oddity, the work of two congenial spirits, brought into collaboration by some happy chance for which the play-going public has every reason to be grateful. Mr. Murray's libretto, in the first place, is as remarkable for its genial, mirth-provoking humour as for its refreshing freedom from vulgarity. His verses flow easily, are well turned and balanced, and frequently disclose light touches of a very delicate and tender poetical feeling. A composer may be esteemed lucky who can get such words as those of the romance "Swift-pionioned bird, in careless circle flying" (act i.), or of the duet, "If you loved me," to set. Some of the comic lyrics—notably "The Merry Brown" (act i.), and "It certainly seems a great pity"—are crisp and epigrammatical enough to have been written by the lamented Henry S. Leigh—I can pay their author no higher compliment. The dialogue, too, is full of excellent fooling and telling "hits," for the most part bearing upon salient topics of the day, and eliciting shouts of hearty laughter. A lively, and yet not coarse libretto, that is not a translation, or an adaptation, or an imitation, but the original creation of an elegant and humorous writer, is so rare an apparition in the realm of dramatic literature, that it cannot be too cordially welcomed. Such an one is the libretto of "Dick," by Mr. Alfred Murray, whose earlier efforts in this particular line have been so far surpassed in every essential respect by this, his latest production, that one can hardly believe him to be the same "bard" who, only three years ago, in his "book" of "Gibraltar" put forward such amazing verses as—

"Far too oft the workman truckles
To swells soft as babe that suckles,"

or

"I once was grand as Nature made me,
Time's ruins Art can now supply :
And, if I only cared to try,
No gay young spark would make afraid me." 1

Mr. Edward Jakobowski's settings of Mr. Murray's capital lyrics are not only agreeably tuneful, but highly appropriate in character to the words with which they are musically associated. The vocal ensembles and orchestral accompaniments, very ably arranged and scored, are obviously the work of a skilled musician, to whom classical models and latter-day innovations are equally familiar. His part writing, for instance, is considerably above the average of such compositions, and his treatments of harmony and rhythm are no less ingenious than effective. There is nothing strikingly original in the melodies of "Dick;" but they are all pretty, and two or three of them are uncommonly taking—viz., the song, "Look and see that no one's by," the romance above alluded to, "Swift-pinioned bird," a chorus "The Aldermen of London," a supremely funny trio, "It certainly seems a great pity," sung by three municipal magnates disguised as dancing Dervishes, the graceful duet, "If you loved me," and "The Legend of the Rats." Perhaps the music of this vivacious little opera may not be destined to achieve immortality; but its life should be long, and is sure to be a merry one.

The production and performance of "Dick" at the Globe Theatre are highly praiseworthy. Great care has manifestly been bestowed upon the

former, and the artists who contribute to the latter one and all sing and act their parts with an obvious enjoyment of what they have to do ; that, in itself, is sufficient to secure them the sympathies of their audience. Messrs. Shine, Lyall, and Cartwright, in the out-and-out extravaganza rôles of Alderman Fitzwarren (the heroine's father), Jack Joskins (an African Admiral), and the Emperor of Morocco, in whose harem the chief action of act ii. takes place, carried all before them on the opening night by a display of sheer high spirits that never flagged for a moment throughout the evening. Messrs. Laye and De Lange, as aldermen intensely conscious of the dignities inherent to their exalted office, but constrained by "circumstances over which they have no control" to wallow in incongruities instead of turtle, were excruciatingly grotesque ; and great credit is due to Mr. Warde for his comic agility as a loose-limbed Moorish slave. Miss Ethel Pierson was a dainty Alice Fitzwarren, as tuneful as a linnet, and furnishing ample excuse, in the way of personal attractions, to the uxorious Emperor of Morocco for his irregularities of conduct in her regard. Dick, her faithful lover, who follows her to the sunny South, and utilizes his historical grimalkin to effect her deliverance from the silken fetters of polygamy, was efficiently represented by Miss Camille Dubois, who sang the music assigned to her with laudable taste and feeling. Mdms. Ewell, Homfrey, and Holt sustained subordinate, but very useful parts, with admirable spirit, and unreserved praise must be accorded to the comely and intelligent young ladies who successively did good service to the piece as London 'Prentices, school-girls at a Highgate "Academy," and odalisques attached to the extensive matrimonial establishment of a much-married African potentate. The scenery and appointments of "Dick" are in perfect keeping with the subject, localities, and situations of the story ; and the orchestra, under the judicious leading of Mr. F. Stanislaus, contributed largely to the enjoyment of one of the pleasantest entertainments it has been my privilege to recommend to the readers of *THE THEATRE* for many a day. In concluding this brief and necessarily superficial notice of a work that cannot fail to establish itself in popular favour, I take leave to express the hope that "Dick" may be the forerunner of other joint-compositions by a musician and librettist who, in this clever opusculum, have given convincing proof that they are capable of meeting a chronic public requirement in an eminently satisfactory manner.

W. B. K.



Our Play=Box.

"YORICK'S LOVE."

A Play, in Three Acts, adapted from the Spanish of JOAQUIN ESTABANEZ, by W. D. HOWELLS.
Produced at the Lyceum Theatre, on the occasion of Mr. LAWRENCE BARRETT'S
first appearance in London, Saturday, April 12, 1884.

Master Yorick ...	MR. LAWRENCE BARRETT.	Gregory	MR. FRED. W. IRISH.
Master Heywood ...	MR. LOUIS JAMES.	Thomas	MR. HAMILTON BELL.
Master Walton ...	MR. JAMES FERNANDEZ.	Mistress Alice ...	MISS MARIE WAINWRIGHT.
Master Edmund ...	MR. MARK QUINTON.	Mistress Dorothy...	MISS ANNIE ROSE.
Master Woodford ...	MR. PHILIP BEN GREET.		

THE old murmur went round directly Lawrence Barrett announced that he would succeed Mary Anderson at Mr. Henry Irving's theatre—a half-stifled nervous murmur—and it came from the countrymen of Lawrence Barrett: "In London there is such prejudice against American actors." To me such a statement is incomprehensible and unfair. For the past twenty years a charge of this character can scarcely be laid against the English play-goer, who has freed himself for ever from the jealous feelings that his father entertained for every form of foreign art. I grant it was not always so. Less than a quarter of a century ago the public who frequented the theatres generally sided with the ill-conditioned actor who resented the intrusion of any foreigner on our stage as an impertinence, and went grumbling round to his tavern, full of complaint about the accursed foreigner who was taking the "bread out of the poor actor's mouth." There was no question of art, or hospitality, or *entente cordiale*. The foreign artist was regarded as an interloper. This jealous, envious, dog-in-the-manger feeling had not subsided when Fechter first appeared at the Princess's Theatre, and lasted long after the first memorable visit of the Comédie Française to the stage of the Opera Comique Theatre. No doubt, long before Fechter arrived we had our French and German plays. Rachel played Adrienne in London, and Devrient played Hamlet, and Lafont, amongst others, was my delight in salad days of criticism. But the actors did not like them. We who wrote about theatrical matters felt and knew this. The French plays in London acted for years as a red rag to the theatrical newspapers and the dramatic clubs. When we praised Got and Favart, Delaunay and Bressant, when we welcomed the first company of artists in the world, we were considered disloyal to our art. "The French actors are always praised—we are never mentioned," was the cry from the opponents of liberality and freedom in art. Gradually, as we stuck to our guns, the smoke of prejudice cleared away. We could afford to despise the sneers of the profession, for we had the public with us. Communication with Paris became easier than heretofore, and actors and actresses were found to visit Paris in their leisure, and to study the art they had professed to despise. The first visit of the Comédie Française was succeeded by a second; the genius of such women as Aimée Desclée and Sarah Bernhardt was recognized; and from the stronger artists we descended to the lesser lights of the Variétés and the Palais

Royale, such as Hortense Schneider, Chaumont, Judic, Théo, Granier, and the rest of them. The time came when we could not exist without the best of everything. And what is the consequence? Why, the consequence is, that we have a far finer stage than now exists in France. We do not need to study from Paris any more. Our Lyceum and Princess's, our Haymarket and St. James's, our Comedy and Criterion, contain better acting than can be found in any corresponding theatre in Paris. We can give them a start at their own favourite distance and beat them easily.

Where, then, is the prejudice against any form of dramatic art? It was not found in the enthusiasm awarded to Salvini by public and profession alike; in the strong interest taken in the performance of Herr Barnay and the Saxe Meiningen troupe—concerning whose art some English critics dared to say that ours was infinitely superior; or the enthusiasm evoked by the Dutch actors from Rotterdam.

And when I come to the supposed prejudice against American artists in this country, I do not find a tittle or shadow of excuse for such an accusation. It is true that Janauschek—much admired in America—drew very poor houses at the Haymarket, but she was badly managed; still, her acting was highly praised and earnestly considered. Was there prejudice when Miss Bateman first appeared as Leah, or when Jefferson delighted us all and turned our heads as Rip Van Winkle? If we did not like John E. Owens, we were charmed with Emmett as Fritz. We courteously received John McCullough, Florence, and Raymond; and the best possible critical attention was paid to the art of Booth, Fanny Davenport, and Mary Anderson.

Unless criticism is to be put on one side in obedience to the laws of hospitality, it is difficult to see from what quarter the charge of prejudice arises. It is surely not prejudice to refuse to take every actor and actress at their own valuation, or at the valuation of the country in which they happened to be born: Americans do precisely the same thing. If some of us like Booth's Richelieu and Lear better than his Hamlet, or Jefferson's Rip better than his Mr. Golightly, or Mary Anderson's Parthenia better than her Pauline; if some of us deplore that Fanny Davenport was ever induced to appear on a small stage and to overdress a not very interesting character, or that Lotta was ill-advised in her selection of plays; if some of us are taken with the gentle vivacity and wilfulness of little Minnie Palmer;—it is not prejudice, but merely what we put forward as an excuse for criticism. Every form of art is welcome in this country; but we do not, thank goodness, appraise art by the blowing of trumpets or the banging of drums. The actor is not the greatest artist over here who puts out the biggest posters, nor is the actress the greatest favourite who wears the largest diamond, or who has gone over to Paris for her dresses. We care for none of these things. An actor unheralded and unpuffed, like Charles Thorne, was as sincerely admired in his way over here as the most electric-lighted star who ever dazzled the eyes of the gaping public.

Possibly the American public will accuse us of irreverence, or ignorance, or prejudice, or insincerity, when we could not take kindly to the play called "*Yorick's Love*," from the Spanish of Estabanez and the English

of Mr. W. D. Howells. We could not see its poetry, or detect its passion. Some of its scenes made us laugh very much indeed, but we were cautious enough to put our handkerchief down our throats and to suppress our merriment. It amused us to see the guilty lovers, actor and actress, kneeling at the feet of a stern theatrical manager, and rehearsing a penitential psalm of contrition in alternate verses. The antiphonal anguish, the strophe and anti-strophe of sorrow, would in England have made a stage manager tear his hair and throw the text at the head of the author. But it passed, as did our subdued chuckle in the stalls. And there were other scenes just as ineffective, notably the "play within a play," when the outraged husband kills his wife's lover whilst fencing with him on the stage.

But there was no need to stretch our courtesy in the case of Lawrence Barrett, whose earnest manner and sympathetic style won over his audience to him immediately. If he has not at present shown any very great or sustained power, it must be charitably remembered that he was not required to do so as Yorick. We shall see what we shall see when "Richelieu" comes on for review; he must then be measured by Phelps and Booth. Macready few of us have seen at an age to criticize. It was the vigour and animation of Lawrence Barrett that pleased his audience best. We have got into a dull, preachy, sententious style over here, and it is getting tiresome. In comedy and tragedy alike we are inclined to drone and dawdle. The Robertson plays, as acted at the Prince of Wales' Theatre, threatened to destroy our comedy style. Each actor and actress except Mrs. Bancroft paused about ten seconds between the completion of one sentence and the commencement of the other. It became tiresome and tedious. Similarly, the serious actors seem to imitate the parson in the pulpit. They adopt a "dearly-beloved-brethren" tone, and make the audience feel that they are "sitting under" them as a congregation. Lawrence Barrett is the opposite to all this. He is rapid—sometimes almost too rapid. He never wastes time; is glib and facile, and expresses much by a most interesting countenance. His voice is pleasant; and, best of all, he has a heart. It may not be a very great heart, or one overcharged with passion, but still it is a heart; and that leads him quickly to the attention of the spectators. Mr. Lawrence Barrett was an agreeable surprise, for he showed us that natural acting can coexist with serious situations. Tragedy—if this is tragedy—can become pleasant when it is not handled too severely. We do not shudder at such a tragedian; we sympathize with him, and like him. He is not a pretentious bore, but a lively friend amongst the new-comers from America. Mr. Louis James, a heavy actor of the old school, and Miss Marie Wainright, a romantic actress of the new, were cordially received; Mr. James Fernandez was as good as ever; Mr. Mark Quinton had capital practice in a most difficult part for a young man, and showed great intelligence; and both Mr. F. W. Irish and Miss Annie Rose lightened up some dull and tedious scenes. Miss Rose promises to be a delightful *ingénue*, and should be encouraged.—C. S.

“THE BEGGAR STUDENT.”

A New and Original Comic Opera, in Four Acts. Music by Herr CARL MILLÖCKER. English libretto by W. BEATTY-KINGSTON. Ballet music by Mons. JACOBI. First produced at the Alhambra Theatre, Saturday, April 12, 1884.

Countess Palmatica...	MISS MADGE STAVART.	Ensign Poppenberg...	MISS LAURIE TREVOR.
Laura	MISS MARION HOOD.	Conrad Malitzki ...	MR. HENRY HALLAM.
Stephania	MISS IRENE VERONA.	Simon Romanovich...	MISS FANNIE LESLIE.
General Ollendorf ...	MR. FRED. MERVIN.	Burgomaster	MR. A. COLLINI.
Major Wangenheim..	MISS MARIE WILLIAMS.	Schnapps	MR. AVNSLEY COOK.
Capt. Schleinitz ...	MISS ALMA STANLEY.	Kummel	MR. G. SINCLAIR.
Capt. Arnheim	MR. ALBERT SIMS.	Gilka	MR. W. HUSK.
Lieut. Richthofien ...	MISS EMILY DUNCAN.	Wurst... ..	MR. T. HODGES.
Lieut. Henritz	MISS MAGGIE RAYSON.	Onuphrie	MR. GEO. A. HONEY.
Ensign Rochhoff ...	MISS VIOLET MELNOTTE.		

THIS opera, by Herr Carl Millöcker, has created a furore on the Continent, and has been most favourably received in America. It would have been strange indeed if England, though in this instance a little behindhand in the matter, had not enabled us to judge of the merits of the music to which half Europe is jiggling and most of America is whistling, and of the value of a libretto which bears so suspicious a resemblance to the Bulwer Lytton time-honoured and fustian play, “The Lady of Lyons.” The Beggar Student is no doubt a milk-and-water Claude Melnotte; he is tempted to assume the disguise of a Prince and to win the heart of a Polish Princess; he woos, he loves, and he repents, like the sentimental gardener’s son, over whose frothy sentiment so many schoolgirls have shed tears and expended their bread-and-butter adoration; but the purely dramatic incidents of the familiar story are made subordinate to a plot intended to be funny, but that strikes one as being dangerously dull. What would have happened to the Beggar Student had it not been for the happy thought of asking Miss Fannie Leslie to play the part of Simon Romanovich, it would be difficult to say. A play at the Alhambra can never fail to attract owing to the beauty of the *mise en scène*, the dances, the decorations, and the ballets, that are so superbly produced on this magnificent stage; but a Beggar Student who had happened to speak as indistinctly, to mumble his words, and to spoil Mr. Beatty-Kingston’s excellent and singable lyrics, as the most of his companions do, would have rendered the opera, so far as plot and story are concerned, into an unintelligible verbal chaos that might be Cingalese, Celtic, or double Dutch. In her way, Miss Fannie Leslie is one of the best and most graceful artists of her time. We care not a jot for the fact that her voice is not strong, when we find it travels everywhere, and when we hear from her lips every syllable distinctly pronounced and every note sweetly expressed. Every song that the gifted little lady sings can be heard and appreciated without the aid of a book; the same can be said of very few others except Mr. Mervin, who is as clear as a bell. But Miss Leslie makes up for want of strength by rare delicacy of taste. What can be better in way of expression than her song, “Full many a maid, both dark and fair”? What easier, more winning, or more full of sly fun than the song, “The game is up! I must admit”? Since Marie Wilton and Louise Keeley left the lighter stage, there has been no such pretty playfulness as this. But best of all—and we cannot express what we mean, unfortunately, without contrast—is Miss Fannie Leslie’s share in the duet, “Shall I boldly undeceive her?” perhaps the prettiest number in the whole opera. When Mr. Beatty-Kingston has been at the trouble to write words at once

so musical and so suited to the given music as these, it would be a thousand pities if they were lost.

“ Only suppose that I were poor and lowly born,
 Only suppose me ragged, friendless and forlorn,
 Only suppose I were a churl of low degree,
 Only suppose me an impostor proved to be,
 Only suppose my wealth should vanish like a dream,
 Only suppose I were not what I seem,
 Beloved ! O tell me
 Wouldst thou from thy heart expel me,
 Tell me, I pray.”

Now the whole value of this pretty and poetical situation is lost unless these words can be spoken caressingly and with meaning. They want to be spoken as well as sung, whispered, uttered, murmured, and acted. Miss Leslie understands them thoroughly. There is a plaintive thrill in her pretty voice that is quite touching. It is the Beggar Student making love, not the pupil from the Musical Academy showing off her voice. We hear every word, we appreciate the situation. But when Miss Marion Hood answers with a responding lyric, we hear nothing but sound, no words, no meaning, no anything, *vox et præterea nihil*. It is a love duet with only one side to it : a poem with only one stanza. It is nonsense to say that the Alhambra is bad for sound or too big for expression. The lady with the weakest voice is heard better than anybody. The reason of the unintelligibility is that ladies who sing are not taught to speak, and have not the talent to distinguish between good words and bad ones. Mr. Kingston's book is altogether admirable. The neatest verse-maker need not be the best or even a decent librettist. He must understand music and appreciate musical accent. We do not get a Sir Arthur Sullivan every day who can set any verses that come from the fertile, but not always musical, brain of Mr. W. S. Gilbert. Mr. Kingston's task was all the more difficult because he had to compose poetry for music already written and set to another language. This is of all things the most difficult. Mr. Kingston succeeded because he is a musician as well as a poet, and because he can play the score and does not require any one to drum it into him.

The night on which I had the pleasure of seeing this opera I was delighted to find the enthusiasm bestowed on a charming young English dancer, a Miss Topsy Elliott, who was called upon suddenly to take the place of Mdlle. Palladino, who was ill, in one of the principal ballets. She danced most gracefully, and delighted everybody. The name sounded familiar to me, and then, searching back in the old volumes of my memory, I recalled the last occasion that I had seen this pretty girl. It was in a sick ward at Guy's Hospital some seven or eight years ago, when the poor child—then a promising dancer—was horribly burned by an accident at the South London Music Hall. There she lay wrapped up in wool and wadding, in tortures of pain, so maimed and scarred that her life was despaired of, and her kind doctors, even if they saved her, could give no hope that she would ever dance again. Through the kindness of my friend, Mr. Edward Ledger, who took a great interest in the case, and accompanied me to the hospital on that occasion, everything was done for the pretty sufferer that could be done. Providence was merciful, youth triumphed, science

succeeded, and now we see Miss Elliott without a trace of her misfortune about her, and bidding fair to be one of our best English dancers.—C. S.

"THE IRONMASTER."

A New Play, in Four Acts, being an English version, by A. W. PINERO, of M. GEORGES OHNET's Drama, "Le Maître de Forges." First produced at St. James's Theatre, Thursday, April 17, 1884.

Duc de Bligny	MR. HENLEY.	Mouchot... ..	MR. DANIELS.
Octave (Marquis de Beaupré)	MR. GEO. ALEXANDER.	Servant of the Marquise	MR. DE VERNEY.
Baron de Préfont... ..	MR. H. WARING.	Servant of Philippe	
Philippe Derblay... ..	MR. KENDAL.	Derblay	MR. T. LOVELL.
Général de Pontac	MR. BRANDON.	Marquise de Beaupré...	MRS. GASTON MURRAY.
Moulinet... ..	MR. J. F. YOUNG.	Baronne de Préfont ...	MISS LINDA DIETZ.
Béchélin... ..	MR. J. MACLEAN.	Claire de Beaupré ...	MRS. KENDAL.
Dr. Servan	MR. A. KNIGHT.	Athénaïss	MISS VANE.
Old Gobert	MR. R. CATHCART.	Suzanne Derblay ...	MISS WEBSTER.
Young Gobert	MR. DAY.	Brigette... ..	MISS TURTLE.

IF it be true that the gradual unfolding of an unknown plot be one of the most important factors of the success of a new play, so much the more should Mr. Pinero, Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, and indeed all concerned, be congratulated on the enthusiastic reception of "The Ironmaster," which was produced on the 17th of April; for so much had it been spoken of, quoted, and discussed before its production, that hardly a member of the large audience which filled the St. James's Theatre could have been ignorant of the working out of the story. First as a novel of George Ohnet's, "Le Maître de Forges," next as dramatized by its able author, and then made known, or at all events partially so, to London playgoers, under the title of "Lady Clare," by Buchanan, the story of "The Ironmaster" was familiar to most of those present, and though the excitement of curiosity for which a "first night" is usually famed was therefore somewhat lacking, its place was more than filled by a keen critical tendency to note how the actors would surmount this drawback, and supply the lack of novelty by perfection of acting. When the intricacies of the plot are already mastered, so much the abler is one to criticize, and it was to this ordeal that the actors were submitting themselves; it was from this ordeal that they came out triumphant. The story is as follows:—Claire de Beaupré, the idol of her widowed mother and young brother, is engaged to her cousin, the Duc de Bligny, who, on hearing that the decision of an English lawsuit, involving utter ruin, is against the de Beauprés, transfers his allegiance to a Mdlle. Moulinet, who, in old schooldays, was Claire's rival, and who now, with her father, a wealthy and retired chocolate manufacturer, had settled in their neighbourhood. During an afternoon's call, Athénaïss Moulinet tells Claire of her engagement to the Duc de Bligny, and, after a grand scene between the two women, in which Mrs. Kendal's strength is for the first time displayed, Claire's resolution is taken. Rather than allow herself to be jilted by the Duc, she will give him his *congé* by accepting the offer of a wealthy ironmaster, who has previously proposed for her, and who is that instant in the house. The act ends effectively by the introduction of de Bligny and Philippe Derblay, the ironmaster. The second act opens after the wedding, which has taken place at midnight, and in it occurs the finest scene of the play, when the good-bys have been said, and husband and wife are at last alone. It is now that the full force of her

situation first breaks upon the wretched Claire, who can only see a gaoler in her adoring husband, and in herself the most miserable of women. The very walls seem a prison, the lake beyond an inviting refuge: she is icy cold, trembling in every limb, outwardly calm, but a very tempest burning within her, and while in this condition her husband approaches her, and half awe-struck by his own great happiness, he gives her his first kiss. As his lips touch hers, she breaks from him with an awful cry of loathing and terror, and from that moment to the final fall of the curtain the actress carried her audience with her. Not a sound was heard, even those persistent pessimists from whom no theatre is free, were breathless, as she stood there erect, motionless and white as death, while the storm gradually broke over her. The suspicions that slowly creep into his eyes, the fierce invective, and finally the wild outburst of passion that breaks from the man, who learns that he has but served as a tool to other ends, is certainly the best work that Mr. Kendal has ever given us. Stiff and constrained until now, his passionate outburst woke dormant sympathy, and his solemn and prophetic declaration that the time would come when the love that had died out in his heart would take birth in hers, and that then in pleading to him, she would plead as to a stone, entitled him to the highest praise. In the third act, the words of the maddened husband have come true, and in the six months that have intervened since their marriage, Claire has grown not only to recognize the injury she has done Derblay, but also to long for his forgiveness and love beyond all else. To add to her grief, Mdlle. Moulinet, her old rival, and now the Duchesse de Bligny, is doing her best to win her husband from her, and apparently succeeding. There are two touches in this act to which notice should be drawn. The one sublime in its exquisite tenderness and truth; the other ridiculous in its visible straining after effect. The first is when Derblay, at the request of the old Marquise, is clasping a circlet round his wife's neck. The terrible anxiety on her face, as he hesitates before complying with her mother's request, the beautiful sunshiny flash that sparkles in her eyes, as for one brief moment his arms encircle her, and then the shadow of pain that darkens them, as in pursuance with the old lady's orders, he coldly and carelessly touches his wife's brow, made up the most eloquent touch of a very beautiful creation. The second incident is the introduction of three members of Derblay's factory, who extol their master and compliment his wife. In "The Squire," Mr. Pinero wrecked a fine scene by introducing a number of workpeople, at whom his audiences laughed; in "Lords and Commons," there was a miner at whom they yawned, and now again we have three old men whose room would be certainly preferable to their company. It may be "a touch of Nature," but it takes a decidedly objectionable form. It is when affairs are in this state, when her love to the husband, who is all gentleness to others and cold to her alone, and her knowledge of the Duchesse's intentions are driving her well-nigh mad, that Claire forms the desperate resolution of appealing to the generosity of her rival. Whether such a course would be adopted by the woman who could hide her sorrow with a smile, and, in defiance of her own pain, with an unfaltering voice congratulate Athénaïss on her marriage, is decidedly an open question. For a man it would be an impossibility to act in such

direct contradiction to his whole nature; and even for a woman—with whom paradox is logic and improbability an every-day affair—it seems peculiar, to say the least of it, more especially for such an intensely proud woman as Claire. Still the novel is Mr. Pinero's precedent, and indefensible as the scene may be, few would have it altered, serving as it does as an excuse for the incomparable acting of Mrs. Kendal. Miss Vane, who, as the Duchesse, acted with cleverness and decision, ably seconded her. Claire's appeal is in vain, and after a brief but tempestuous scene, the Duc and his wife are forced to leave the house. The last act is perhaps scarcely so equally written as the three preceding, for the beginning somewhat drags and the conclusion is hurried. A meeting has, of course, been arranged between Derblay and De Bligny, and the former is prevailed upon to see his wife alone, as it may be for the last time. She enters, and there alone, with death staring them in the face (for the Duc is a noted duellist), the miserable suspicions and misunderstandings are at last swept away, and husband and wife finds themselves secure in each other's love. After a desperate resistance on the part of the terrified wife, who trembles for the life for which she would so gladly give her own, Derblay breaks from her, and, rushing off to keep his appointment, leaves the well-nigh distraught woman alone. The play, which is painful throughout, here grows terrible in its intensity. Claire staggers to the window, and crouching there with ashen face and distended eyeballs, sees her husband pass towards the woods. In very delirium of grief she reels back into the room. "He is there . . . and I . . . his wife!" she mutters mechanically. At the words "His wife," her waning faculties wakes again, and with a piercing scream she rushes from the room. In the meantime the Duc and Derblay are facing each, the word is given, the Duc fires and hits, not his opponent, but the devoted wife, who has gained the wood and thrown herself between them. A cry from the agonized husband, a surgeon's hasty assurance that the wound is slight, a pathetic entreaty from Claire to be "taken home again," and the play is at an end.

To say that Mrs. Gaston Murray played the Marquise de Beaupré, is to say that the Marquise was well played, and Miss Linda Dietz, albeit possessed of but a minor rôle, did her utmost with it. Indeed all the parts were filled with a care and finish on which English theatres cannot often be complimented, and to Messrs. Henley and Alexander in particular, praise is due. The former gentleman made a most satisfactory villain, though the monotony of his voice told somewhat against him, and the Octave of Mr. Alexander was a most excellent and careful performance. "Quite a Mr. and Mrs. Kendal piece," said a man in the lobby coming out. "Well, what better could you have?" retorted his friends, to which number one could find no reply. This management have taught us to understand by "quite a Kendal piece," grace, tenderness, and intelligence, well arranged accessories, and a loyally responsive company, and as all this and more is brought to bear on the new play, it is with no disrespect to Mr. Pinero, or anyone else concerned, that it is as "quite a Kendal piece" that we can safely predict a long run for "The Ironmaster."

M. E. W.

Our Omnibus=Boys.

DEATH has indeed been busy in the ranks of those we respect and admire most in the world of literature and art. First, Marie Litton, who has been patiently suffering for many weary months in silent agony ; then Charles Reade, who left England just before Christmas a doomed man, and came home bravely to see the last of old friends under his own roof-tree ; next Henry James Byron, who had long ago retired from our pleasant circles, and who, within an hour of his departure, had expressed a strong hope and belief that he had many years of work and life before him ; then Mrs. Alfred Wigan, almost forgotten now by the playgoers of to-day ; lastly, Mrs. Thomas Thorne, retired from the stage for some years, now, the affectionate wife of our popular actor, who was never so happy as when she was gathering around her "Our Boys," as she used to call them, friends and companions who lighten the daily struggle of life with pleasant words and affectionate greetings, and who sympathize with one another as the contest is bright or arduous. With every one of all these now laid to their long rest, it was my good fortune to be on terms of close intimacy ; by some I was privileged to be called a friend, and it would be strange indeed if I did not lament this blackest of black months that has made us stand so often at open graves, to smell the sickly odour of the death flowers, and to hear the cruel earth rattle on the coffin that contains all that is left of what was once so bright, so affectionate, so kindly and so sincere.

It was the misfortune of Marie Litton to come upon the stage somewhat too late in life. She could not compete satisfactorily with her sisters in art who had been trained for the stage from infancy, and though fascinating in person and attractive in manner, ever industrious, earnest and intelligent, she lacked the value of that drudgery that seldom fails to bear good fruit. Still in her time she did very many charming things, and we shall all look back to her revival of "As You Like It," at the Imperial Theatre, and to her reproduction of countless old plays both there and at the Gaiety, with very sincere delight. By the sly fund of humour that was in her, and a great natural intelligence, Marie Litton nearly succeeded in counteracting the defect of an unmanageable and unsympathetic voice, but from one end of her career to the other she was admired and respected. Death came to her in its most cruel and odious form. She suffered much, but endured bravely, and we have all pleasant memories of her in the old-fashioned frocks of the wilful "Country Girl," or in the galligaskins of the last pretty Rosalind we have seen.

The loss of Charles Reade to literature is a severe one indeed. In the oncoming time his position amongst his contemporaries will be more accurately determined. He was a man who wanted understanding. He could hit out hard when he liked with that iron hand of his, as I know as

well as most men, but he could be gentle and kind and affectionate and forgiving, as I have had ample opportunity for knowing. Charles Reade took the greatest and most unselfish interest in the fortunes of this Magazine, and, as our readers know full well, he contributed to the pages of *THE THEATRE ANNUAL*—almost the last thing he ever wrote. It was just before Christmas last year. He was terribly ill at the time—so ill that he could scarcely breathe—and it was positive pain for him to hold a pen; but sooner than break a promise he had made, he, probably for the first time in his life, dictated an article which was published in the *THEATRE ANNUAL*, and admirable enough it proved to be.

Something has been recently written concerning the dislike of Charles Reade for poetry, and his ridicule of the poetaster. I think I am in a position to contribute something to this controversy, and to show the true views of the man on the subject. At the risk of being considered unduly egotistical, I am sure many of our readers will care to know what Charles Reade really thought of the occasional verses dealing dramatically with subjects of the day—in other words, “poems for recitation,” which have appeared from time to time in this Magazine, and have obtained considerable popularity. The following letter acknowledges the receipt of a small book of poems culled chiefly from *THE THEATRE* and other periodicals:—

“3, Bloomfield Villas, Uxbridge Road,

“‘Soyons de notre siècle.’

“Sept. 17, 1883.

“DEAR ———

“Many thanks for your obliging letter and your short epics on current events, the poetry of which you have seen. Nothing in recent literature has interested me so much. I have often asked myself why these pearls of the day are passed over by poets, and in my opinion you have set a great and salutary example. Men are too prone to think that poetry belongs to the past. But I cannot think so. If men would do as you have done, and cultivate the poetic eye, surely they would find that the greater the age, the more numerous the true poetic pearls. A Crimean soldier, sore wounded, begged Miss Nightingale to stand in the sunlight at the window and let her shadow fall upon his bed, since she could not visit all the poor fellows.

“I have read the ‘*Iliad*’ in former days, but I know nothing in it so poetical as that. I am sure you have opened a rich vein. Work it. But if I must advise, do not go much into novelties of metre. John Bull cannot relish too many novelties at a time. I would give him new matter with the old ring to it. By way of intellectual exercise I should like to see one good story of the day sung by you in Crabbe’s peculiar style. You could easily catch it; but, after all, such things are rather tricky.

“Yours very truly,

“CHARLES READE.”

But Charles Reade had no need of verse to awaken the great-hearted public to a sense of justice or to arouse their sympathies. His prose was like the thunder of artillery as compared to the clarion ring of verse. How

well I remember that awful scene in the Central Criminal Court when, close upon midnight, after a day of intense excitement and anxiety, the Stauntons and Alice Rhodes were condemned to death for what was called the Penge murder. One woman after the other swooned away and was borne below more dead than alive. It was the wild sharp scream of an animal wounded to the death. And then when the women were gone—wife of one man and mistress of the other—the two startled brothers, white with terror, huddled together, and stood trembling and swaying hand in hand, whilst the awful sentence was pronounced on them. It was a scene never to be forgotten. The ill-lighted court, the howling of the excited mob outside, the shrill scream of the women, and the dull plaintive moan of the men. A journalist could only convey to the public next morning some vague outline of the picture, but Charles Reade took the story to heart, and sitting down at his desk next day, wrote so powerfully, so brilliantly, and so convincingly that he saved, or helped to save, the lives of four human beings. The sentence was not allowed to stand. Alice Rhodes received a pardon, and the lives of the wretched three were spared. This was only one of many instances where Charles Reade proved the truth of the adage that a friend in need is a friend indeed. He felt deeply, and like most men of strong sentiment, he expressed himself with vigour, whether as an opponent or as a sympathizer. The man's nature is best shown in the epitaph he wrote for the grave of Laura Seymour—his life-long friend; and in the last words he ever spoke, full of faith and manly piety, that will eventually be graven on his own tomb.

It was about the year 1860 when I first made the acquaintance of Henry James Byron, and a more charming companion it would be difficult, indeed, to find. As an author I had laughed with him some years previously when he was the popular writer of the Strand burlesques in the days when Marie Wilton and Fanny Josepfs, and Clarke and Rogers, Kate Carson and Lavine, old Turner and Edge made a merry company indeed. We boys used to go to the Strand Theatre night after night to see "William Tell" and "Esmeralda," and the other burlesques of that delightful period, and it was a good entertainment, I can tell you, with Belford and Parselle and Miss Swanborough in the comedietta, with a burlesque such as is not seen now-a-days, and probably a farce like "Short and Sweet," with Clarke and Rogers in it as a finale. I don't suppose that anybody ever saw Byron out of temper. He sometimes grumbled a bit in a comical way; he pretended to be dyspeptic and ailing at times, but a joke would always restore him to himself, and to hear him laugh when anything tickled his fancy was true enjoyment. I like to think of him in the old days at the Arundel Club, laughing at the earnestness of Leicester Buckingham, chaffing with Charles Coleman or Tom Robertson, and ridiculing the attempt to turn a charming Bohemian institution into a half-and-half West-End club. These were the days when a mild-faced and amiable solicitor imitated the plunging of a hippopotamus in a tank, and represented the seasons of the year by facial expression. It was Byron, who with his calm face and twinkling eye always led up to these jokes, and made Bohemia a place to be well remembered. I like to picture Byron and Marie Wilton, when the Prince of Wales' Theatre was first opened in the Tottenham Court Road, counting out their spoils—

it was like boy and girl playing at management for a time—and each carrying home their share tied up in a pocket-handkerchief, until at last the weight of the coin became so heavy that the shrewd little lady mildly suggested to Byron that it might be better if they had a bank—a form of luxury that had never before suggested itself to either of them. I like to remember how Byron gave Tom Robertson his first lift in life, and urged strongly the production of “Society” at the Prince of Wales’ Theatre, in preference to his own work, although the play had—most luckily—been refused by Buckstone at the Haymarket, and considered worthless. There was no one in the world more proud of Robertson’s success than Byron was, for he knew the disastrous ill-luck that had attended his friend, and he was confident of his power and brilliancy. I like to recall some delightful Sunday evening dinner-parties at the house of Charles Mathews, in Pelham Crescent, Brompton, when, amongst such men as our host (always in his dressing-gown and smoking-cap), old Planché, Frank Matthews, Edmund Yates, Arthur Sketchley, Palgrave Simpson, Walter Gordon, and many more. Byron was the best of all good company. I like to remember how he struggled bravely on when ill-fortune laid him by the heel; how he worked incessantly to drive away dull care; how inimitably he wrote, and how well he acted himself, for every part he played was H. J. Byron; how delightful it was to meet with him again when ill-health drove him out of the world, and how constant he was to the companions of his brighter and happier days. Not one of them forgot him at his funeral. Every one was at the Brompton Cemetery, from Mr. Albert Levy, probably the oldest friend of his in London, down to the most recent acquaintance. All loved him, and in their hearts sincerely felt that those who mourning stood around his grave would scarcely see his like again. Like Charles Reade, notwithstanding his severe illness, Byron managed to send me his contribution to THE THEATRE ANNUAL, and wrote expressing a hope that it would not be the last for many years to come. But it was not to be.

Those who knew Byron best, and were most frequently in correspondence with him, may have observed that he was not one of those consciously brilliant letter-writers who seem to reckon on future fame for the smallest of their epistolary utterances. One of his oldest literary friends, whom he always consulted before entrance on a new undertaking, and whose aid as contributor he was prompt to engage, has heaps of his letters, and looks in vain among them for any of the playful quality which distinguished his writings designed for publication. They are earnest and to the point; business-like, simple, and direct; but scarcely indicating the hand of one versed in authorship. In conversation, it was quite another thing. He said freely things as good as he wrote or better. He laughed, naturally and unreservedly, at his own jokes; or rather, he laughed at the subject and gist of them—at the humour of the theme, not at the wit of expression. The distinction is important. Humour and wit seldom meet on such friendly terms as in Byron’s laughter, which always gave a discerning hearer the impression of self-abnegation far more than egotism. It was for others to remember his jokes, and to recall them. They were the momentary off-

spring of humorous feeling, which reverted to the cause, and slighted the effect. He laughed, that is to say, at the ludicrous object present to his mind, not at his own cleverness.

For one who aimed at neatness and polish in his prose style, and communicated a certain roundness to his versification, Byron was strangely indifferent to the rhyming of his happiest lines. The dog-letter, for him, had no characteristic importance; and he was as unconscious of solecism in apposing "briar" phonetically to "Maria" as are those clergymen who, in reading the prayer for the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, say "Victoria Rour." Of rhymers indifferent thus to the sound, ring, and reverberation of the consonant *r*, we have a few whose high position as comic authors may keep one another in countenance. Among them, past and present, may be mentioned Frank Talfourd (Byron's immediate predecessor in burlesque), Mr. G. A. Sala, and Mr. Frank Burnand. To these, I think, should be added Mr. Robert Reece, and of course Mr. W. S. Gilbert, who is almost faultless as a rhymist.

As first editor of *The Comic News*, which he started in conjunction with Mr. Maddick, Mr. H. J. Byron showed a spirit which proved contagious, and for some time the pages were enlivened with quips and cranks of the most methodical madness. Men of older experience in faceciosity of the marketable kind entered into the fun of the thing, took a new lease of boyhood from the catching cachinnation of their juvenile friend, together with something of his heedless, headlong defiance of literary law and order, and made the weekly publication as funny as other things of the kind were dull. But the time had not come for any new comic paper to hold its own against *Punch*. Mr. Byron, though an excellent editor, with a singular power of communicating his ideas and wishes to those who followed his lead, found his popularity as a dramatist sufficient to keep his time profitably occupied. The last of his serial ventures was *Mirth*, a monthly magazine, in which, as in every enterprise of the kind that he conducted, he had the steadfast help of his old colleague, Mr. Godfrey Turner, one of the most industrious contributors, twenty years before, to the journal over which he mounted his bold punning mottoes, "Do him and draw it," a faint echo of "Dieu et mon Droit," and the astoundingly prolonged jingle of the words, "Honi soit qui mal y pense," in the significant and characteristic sentence, "On his walk he madly puns." The life of *Mirth* was shorter than that of *The Comic News*, and scarce as merry.

I have received the following charming memoir from my old friend, Robert Reece, who knew Byron perhaps better than any of us:—

"I could have wished for more time in which to record in THE THEATRE my personal reminiscences of Byron. As it is, what I set down here must, of necessity, be both brief and disjointed.

"From the date of my very first acquaintance with my late dearly-loved friend, we were on terms of close and affectionate intimacy. For years before I knew him I was his faithful disciple; especially at the Strand Theatre, where, so long ago as 1857, Merivale (another devotee) and myself were known as 'Nos. 8 and 9.' We occupied stalls with these numbers, and

I believe we 'sat at the feet' of H. J. Byron at least three nights in the week.

"Curiously enough, that devotion was rewarded; for, whether there was a peculiar sympathy of thought between us (I am not comparing myself to him in any sense), or whether my most obvious affection for him made him send out his heart to me, at all events, no living man can give such evidence of intimacy with Byron as myself. To begin with—he took me, professionally, by the hand; gave me the work he was to have done himself for a theatre; helped me, both practically and by advice, in making that work a success; and generally pushed me forward into the coveted ranks. Rare unselfishness, and not to be forgotten by me! He was my little son's godfather. Here is his letter (October, 1875):—'How can I reply but by saying I shall be most happy, most delighted to stand godfather to your little son. Please *at once* let me know what his names are to be, also the date of the event. You cannot imagine how deeply I feel your friendly request.—Yours ever, H. J. BYRON.' I quote this, not without some natural pride (which may be forgiven me), to show how affectionate Byron *could* be, re-cluse, as some chose to call him.

"I do not think he ever omitted me from any literary undertaking, such as magazine work, &c. He also often transferred his own business to me, with implicit confidence; aiding me, as I have before said, but positively declining to share remuneration. On the question of his health, *never* good, he often referred to me. Here is a letter in reply to a somewhat dogmatic essay to him on gout:—'*Many* thanks for your kind letter. But is it wise to suppress gout? I am recommended whisky. Claret I should imagine to be good (of course, if it *were*, it would be!); but Burgundy I believe to have been the cause in each case of mine (I don't mean each case of *Burgundy*, but of gout). My doctor has advised me to do nothing, an occupation in which I excel. I didn't call the doctor in till *I* was calling out: then he suggested iodide of potassium—but I don't want, when I'm dead, to say, I-ha'-died o' potassium!' &c. This is a very long letter, written while he was in pain, but his sweet cheerfulness runs through four closely-inscribed pages.

"Byron, like myself, detested rehearsals. I used to wait for him, and he would creep out of the theatre, and walk round Covent Garden Market for a whole afternoon. This he called 'seeing each other home.' Once when he was rehearsing at, I fancy, the Charing Cross Theatre, missing him, I found him at a well-known tavern in the Strand. 'What! *you* in a public-house! I never saw you in a public-house in my life!' said I. 'Ah,' replied Byron, 'that's because you don't go to them *yourself*!' On another occasion, I walked into Mr. Talbot Smith's room at the Gaiety Theatre, and surprised Byron in the act of pouring some whisky into a glass. 'That looks bad, Byron,' said I. Byron drank his whisky-and-water, and coolly replied, 'But it tastes first-rate, my boy!' I may adjoin here the fact that he was very abstemious, though he would sometimes assume the air of a reckless *bon vivant* indifferently. He writes to me, after a rehearsal:—'Done up, after reading T.R.H. piece: what must the actors be?' This piece was 'Married in Haste,' of which he wrote to me his own opinion that it was the 'best thing' he had

done; adding, 'but it can't be a success if *you* are not present,' and he enclosed me a stall.

"I don't know if any one has recorded the absurd answer he gave to some one (I *think* Frank Musgrave), when the person said, 'Well, good-by; I'm going to Piccadilly.' 'All right,' said Byron, 'pick a *good* one!' This was sheer high spirits. No one has mentioned that Byron did the popular version of 'La Fille de Madame Angot.' I remember it, because Mr. Shepherd commissioned me to do it, at the same time that Mr. Charles Head gave the work to Byron. We had a consolatory dinner over the event at the Westminster Club, but I fear the only tears shed were those produced by laughter. I never met anybody who so thoroughly enjoyed a joke as Byron did. To 'cap' him was a rare difficulty. Sometimes we hit on a similar joke. He writes to me: 'July 3, 1878. Oh! please, don't be angry! I had your joke in a most important place in my *Criterion* piece—written months back, and to be produced, Heaven knows where—and I know you wouldn't mind my keeping back *your* pun in the Page of Aphorisms—by the way, it's only half-a-rism. I mean "page," and if you're angry, I'll have it in next month, "leaded" and (like old women) in "caps." I am laid up with the *gout*, beastly ill-tempered, and feeling very like an old man in a farce, cutting off my nephew with a shilling, and continually crying out—"Zounds!"—Yours, podagrably, H. J. Byron.'

"I could write more of this dear fellow, the most lovable, most unselfish, the wittiest, brightest man of his time; but want of space forbids. I put his letters away, lingering over them, as over treasures. And while I write these lines his son brings me a letter from Byron's dear wife, and a book of his, with the book-marker (a paper-knife) between the leaves exactly as he last left it. Surely it is time to cease. All that remains to me now is the recollection of his beautiful face as I saw him in his coffin, and the knowledge that I have lost the dearest and best friend I ever knew."

The death of Mrs. Alfred Wigan, at an advanced age, makes some of us feel old indeed. One frequent contributor to these pages felt, on reading the obituary paragraph in the papers, that it pronounced his own superannuation. He remembers Miss Leonora Pincott as Miss Leonora Pincott; and she was Mrs. Alfred Wigan when, as the utility actress at the Lyceum, she opened the Keeley management, literally, by speaking the first lines in the first scene of Gilbert A'Beckett's "Forty Thieves," she being Inspector of a fairy police-force. Her husband, who had then but recently emerged from unmerited obscurity, played Mustapha the cobbler in this burlesque, and made the part an Orientalized Irishman. Miss Woolgar, fresh from the provinces, was in the cast, as were the Keeleys, Miss Fairbrother, Frank Matthews, and Mr. H. J. Turner. Mrs. Wigan mellowed into an excellent comedian, with capabilities of portraying strong emotion with quiet and forcible intensity, when demands were made on her full dramatic powers. One of her best assumptions was the much compromised lady in "Still Waters Run Deep." It would have been scarcely possible for any actress—even Mrs. Stirling herself—to render this part with the peculiar success of Mrs. Alfred Wigan.

I am indebted to my valued friend, Palgrave Simpson, for the following admirable notes, which will be read with the greatest interest at the present moment:—

“Death has swept lately with a whirlwind over the English stage, striking down in a few days some of the most popular representatives of our drama. The first to fall was the youngest, the charming and engaging Marie Litton, who had risen, by her industry, energy, and bright intelligence to be the ‘Rosalind’ of the period, and who, from the time when she appeared at the Princess’s Theatre (at a very early age) as Effie Deans, in Dion Boucicault’s dramatic version of ‘The Heart of Midlothian,’ had worked herself up to be the manageress of several London theatres—notably The Court, which was her own property—and to be the exponent of the principal female characters in the old comedies, which were admirably and most successfully revived under her tasteful auspices.

“Next followed sturdy Charles Reade, the would-be reformer of social and theatrical abuses, which he invariably attacked with sledge-hammer, pulverizing violence. The novelist, *par excellence*, who prided himself far more on being a dramatist, although in the former capacity he stood among the highest of the generation, whilst in the latter he could only claim a third-rate position—sturdy, kind-hearted, energetic Charles Reade, who could be ill spared among the literary men of the day.

“Immediately on him followed Byron—a dramatist who had obtained a high rank in an avocation in which he was prolific and apparently inexhaustible; teeming still, it might have been surmised, with much more dramatic work, when he was called away and able to enliven our stage no more—bright, genial, lovable Byron, from whose lips witticisms flowed in as rich profusion as the pearls and diamonds from the mouth of the enchanted Princess in the fairy tale, and who was the delight of all the friends who had the privilege of his society, until ill-health secluded him prematurely from the social world.

“Next succumbed a once well-known actress, ripe in years for death’s sickle, and one of the veterans of the stage—Mrs. Alfred Wigan. Poor lady, how shocked she, who prided herself so strangely to the last on her charms of youth and personal attraction, would have been at the bare notion that such an appellation as ‘veteran’ could have been applied to her, yet so it was. The first record we have of this actress on the stage dates as far back as 1827, when we find her figuring in her maiden name of Miss Leonora Pincott, at Drury Lane, as Donna Isabella (or some name of the kind) in the spectacular Easter drama of ‘Gil Blas,’ with James Wallack as Rolando, the Robber Captain, Miss Kelly—the Miss Kelly, who herself has only lately left the world at an advanced age—as the young hero of the drama, and the late Benjamin Webster in the part of a very fat ‘nigger,’ who hobbled slowly about the stage, with the catchword (considered very amusing by the gods), ‘I run like a racehorse, I fly like a swallow.’ In this piece Miss Leonora Pincott played no greater part than that of an interesting ‘walking lady.’ She never possessed much physical attraction; may her shade pardon this statement, which would have wounded her deeply when living. But she had bright eyes then, a mass of dark hair, a plump partridge-like figure, and the general freshness of youth

—in fact, though it is difficult to realize the fact, she *was* young once. As allusion has been made to her splendid hair, one of Douglas Jerrold's smart but biting witticisms may now be recorded. The lady complained to him that she was losing her hair rapidly, and she attributed this disaster to her profuse use of *Eau de Cologne*. 'Caused by Eau de Cologne—nonsense, Ma'am,' said Douglas Jerrold, 'it is caused by the essence of thyme' (time).

"Miss Leonora Pincott, although engaged in Madame Vestris's famous Olympic company, and other theatres, never rose in her profession until after her marriage with Alfred Wigan, whom she had nursed during a dangerous illness, and, who, although many years younger than herself, rewarded her tender care by an offer of his hand.

"As Mrs. Alfred Wigan, the actress gradually rose in her profession and in popularity. She was ambitious; she was adroit. By tact and *finesse* she knew how to elevate her husband; and she knew also how to profit by the scaffolding which she raised up for him.

"There was a general idea that it was Alfred Wigan who made his wife the actress she became. The contrary was undoubtedly the case. It was the wife, who, with her consummate knowledge of the stage, and her undisputed cleverness, made a distinguished actor of the husband. She was his instructress, his adviser, his coach, in fact: and it was through her that Alfred Wigan made his name and fame. Her cleverness made her one of the best—perhaps the best—of the stage-managers of the time, when the Wigans became managers of the Olympic Theatre. She was apt to boast that she had *made* Robson! In this assertion there was certainly considerable exaggeration. But there is no doubt, that in stage-business, she showed him much which contributed greatly to his fame. Those who knew the Olympic Theatre intimately in Robson's earlier days, can testify to the fact that some of the famous actor's best 'points' were indicated to him by Mrs. Alfred Wigan, who, although never a *great* actress herself, she was a very *clever* one, by the way—had the faculty of being able to teach others how to produce remarkable effects which she was not able to execute herself. In many characters, however, she made a great success, the most remarkable, perhaps, being Miss Yellow Leaf, in 'The Bengal Tiger.' She was also the original of the part lately acted by Mrs. Kendal in 'A Scrap of Paper,' when the piece was first produced at the St. James's Theatre during the management of that house by the Wigans.

"Although Mrs. Wigan was very proud of boasting of her intimate friendships with lords and ladies, and even with royalties, she was wise and sensible enough never to repudiate her early career in life. Indeed, she delighted in citing it to her more intimate friends, in order to prove how she had raised herself by her own intelligence, energy, and industry to the comparatively high position she had attained. Her mother was of the well-known theatrical family of the Wallacks, and a sister of the once-celebrated James Wallack, we believe. But fortune cannot have smiled on her union with Mr. Pincott, as in the childhood days of the little Leonora, we find the father to have been a showman at country fairs, and the child to have been brought up to perform on stilts and dance on the slack wire. This early education caused Madame Vestris, when she had cause to com-

plain of any arrogance on the part of Leonora, to 'say, 'Poor thing! she can't help it! You know she was bred to the high ropes.' But the actress herself never felt the sneer, as she never denied her origin. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum.*"

Mr. Alfred Kelvin, a young reciter who is rapidly coming to the front, gave a miscellaneous recital at the Hollybush Assembly Rooms, Hampstead, on March 27. The programme was divided into two parts, the first consisting of the opening act of "Hamlet," and "The Pickwick Trial;" the second part included "The Dream of Eugene Aram," "The Frenchman and the Rats," "Mrs. Caudle's Umbrella Lecture," and "Coming Home." The last-named piece is from the pen of Mr. Kelvin, and was published some months ago in *THE THEATRE*, under his own name—Alfred Berlyn. His talents are evidently not only confined to recitation, for "Coming Home" is a very prettily written poem, containing a dramatic and pathetic story. Every item in the programme was received with loud and thoroughly well-deserved applause, by a large and appreciative audience. Where everything was so good it is difficult to mention any particular effort as specially worthy of note, but perhaps Mr. Kelvin was heard to most advantage in "Hamlet" and the "Pickwick Trial." In the first-named he displayed great dramatic power and intensity, besides giving all the characters a strong individuality. In "The Pickwick Trial" his humorous abilities proved to be of the very highest order, some really funny "gags" fairly convulsing the audience. The changes of voice, too, were remarkably clever and well-sustained. Those who have not yet had the advantage of hearing Mr. Kelvin have a rare treat in store.

St. George's Hall presented a most brilliant scene on the 29th of March, when an amateur dramatic entertainment was given in aid of the funds of the French Hospital of London. The performance, like everything connected with this excellent institution, was under royal and most distinguished patronage. It was a bold thing, on the part of amateurs, to choose "The Merchant of Venice," especially when the reading of Henry Irving and Ellen Terry was followed—at a respectful distance, of course. We have, on another occasion, stated our opinion that, in modern comedy, Mr. A. George Hockley could rank with some of the best professionals of the day; but to attempt Shylock showed an amount of courage which rather took us by surprise. The result, however, was more satisfactory than could have been expected. The impersonation was consistent and free from exaggeration; what it lacked was power. It was almost a pity that Mr. Hockley should have carefully studied and copied Irving's Shylock, for it gave one the idea of a faded photograph. However, from an amateur point of view, it was very good. Of the Portia of Mrs. George Thomson, the least said the better. The lady is very pretty, but the expression of her face never varies, and "by-play" is a sealed book to her; she imitated Ellen Terry like a well-contrived puppet, repeating her lines like a child who has learned a lesson. The part of Nerissa was undertaken by Miss Kate Kenny, in lieu of Miss Emily Sheridan, who was ill, and rendered in a playful and taking manner that warranted Gratiano's

liking for the maid. The Princess Hellen Randhir Singh was lovely and graceful as Jessica. Mr. John Pullman was careful as Antonio. Mr. Arthur Ayers showed much earnestness and feeling as Bassanio ; the part suited him well. We sincerely congratulate Mr. B. Webster on the simple, unaffected way in which he delivered the lines, "How sweet the moonlight," &c., in the last act. His Lorenzo was natural throughout. Mr. Charles H. Lamb was the Gratiano. As usual with him, he was rather stiff at first, and then warmed up to his work, and did very well. Mr. S. B. Sheridan has an unfortunate fault in so young an actor, that of being stagey. Mr. J. Ellis Pride showed much sense of humour as Launcelot Gobbo. The other parts were undertaken by Mr. W. Ashe Payne, Mr. Cave Montagu, Mr. J. Stockley, Mr. Tredgold, Mr. J. Baylis, Mr. G. Fox, Mr. Claude Penley, Mr. C. L. Lunn. The dances, under the direction of Mr. Paul Valentine, were well executed ; and Sir Arthur Sullivan's charming "Music to the Masque" was introduced with much effect. On the whole, the performance was a decided success, but would have been improved if it had gone off a little more briskly.

On the 3d of April, Miss Helen Vicary gave a *matinée* at the Imperial. The house was full, and the audience appreciative. The first piece, "The Loan of a Lover," showed Miss Vicary to much advantage as Gertrude. Although singing is not her *forte*, she has a very sweet voice in speaking, a charming smile, and a sympathetic face. In the second item on the programme, "A Wonderful Woman," she was Madame Hortense Bertand, and her acting was simple and natural ; she might have been a trifle more haughty, and she looked decidedly too young ; but surely that is not her fault. Miss Helen Vicary has steadily improved since she left the rank of amateurs, and she deserves to succeed. She was well supported by Miss Mary Brown, Mr. Brian Darley, Mr. Charles Williams, Captain Disney Roebuck, and Mr. Oswald Brand, amateurs and professionals ; but the rest of the company were very poor indeed.

The Carleton Dramatic Club gave a performance of "The Ticket-of-Leave Man" on Friday, April 4, at St. George's Hall. It was preceded by Martin Becher's farce "In Possession." Mr. C. C. Homan was very amusing as the man in possession ; but why did he wear a wig of such an impossible red ? Mr. J. M. Powell gave a characteristic rendering of the lawyer ; Mr. H. S. Naylor was satisfactory as Rattleton Rorke ; Mr. R. J. Hogson was worse than amateurish as the Major ; Miss G. Findon was very good and natural in the small part of the lady's maid. I reviewed this young lady's *début* some time back, and am happy to notice an improvement in the right direction. "The Ticket-of-Leave Man" was performed in a manner which reflects much credit on all who took part in it. I have seldom seen so excellent an amateur performance. There is a wonderful vitality and never-failing source of interest in this drama ; its grasp on the sympathy of the audience is as strong as ever, and it was acted *con amore*. Mr. A. T. Frankish deserves unqualified praise for his earnest and manly rendering of Bob Brierly. Excellent throughout, he was especially good in the fourth act. Mr. A. T. Frankish is one of the very best amateurs of the

day, and is evidently imbued with the true principle that nothing is stationary in art, and that if you do not wish to retrograde you must improve. Mr. A. E. Drinkwater gave a most finished impersonation of the Tiger; Mr. J. M. Powell was an admirable Hawkshaw; Mr. John Whicher was a fair Moss; Mr. H. L. Smiles extremely weak as Mr. Gibson; Mr. H. S. Carstairs was a good Green Jones—it is unfortunate that his voice is not stronger; Mr. W. H. Frankish was full of spirit and mischief as Sam, and Mr. C. C. Homan did well in the small part of Maltby; Miss Ivan Bristowe was very interesting as May Edwards—the touching grace of her impersonation pleased every one, and her singing of one verse of “In the Gloaming” showed her the fortunate possessor of a rich melodious voice; Miss Mary Brown as Emily St. Evremont was not as good as usual—she appeared to be thinking of something else the whole time; the Mrs. Willoughby of Miss Emily Miller was a *chef-d’œuvre* of its kind, and even the recollection of Mrs. Stephens, one of the best “old women” on the stage, does not in any way put Miss Miller’s performance in the shade. I sincerely congratulate the Carleton Club on one of the best performances they have yet given.

On Saturday, April 19, Mr. Charles Stewart gave a performance of “Moths” at Ladbroke Hall. Dramatized novels are always disjointed and unsatisfactory, but this mutilated version is far worse than usual, and dealing, as it does, with a dangerous story, the result is more depressing still. Unfortunately, the acting was hardly calculated to redeem this painful impression. Mr. Gerald Godfrey was a good Prince Zouroff, his manner expressing appropriately the brutality of the Cossack glossed over with the thin coating of worldly polish. Of the Duke of Mull, as represented by Mr. Charles Stewart, I can only say both part and performer were absolutely colourless. Mr. Walter Russell would have been an excellent Lord Jura, had he not been so uncertain as to his words; this want of memory was to be regretted, for I have always found him a good and conscientious actor. I say *always* for Mr. Walter Russell (who was acting by permission of Messrs. John Clayton and Arthur Cecil) bears such an extraordinary likeness to Mr. Walter Oldershaw of the G. E. M. Amateur Dramatic Club, that I feel quite justified in connecting the two together. The one thing that can be said in favour of Mr. John Tresahar, the Raphael de Corrèze, is that he has a good voice, but his delivery is pretentious and unnatural; the continual use of the interjection “Ah!” with a deep sigh after every half-dozen words, is at last absolutely irritating to the listener. The monotony of his performance spoiled the effect of his scene with Vera in the fourth act. In this he showed much feeling and earnestness, but having unnecessarily adopted the despairing tone from the beginning of the play, this scene fell flat, although it was the best rendered. Miss Isabel Nelson as Vera was also at her best in this last act, and played well in the first. In the second and third she did not at all show to advantage. Miss Nelson is pretty and interesting, but her attitudes, walk and gesture are distressingly awkward and devoid of grace; this is not said in a spirit of unkind criticism, but if this lady, who is very young, would understand that in acting the study of deportment is quite as important as that of

elocution, she would easily gain a charm which her very pleasing presence lacked. Miss Florence Haydon gave a finished interpretation of Lady Dolly : this was undoubtedly one of the best impersonations of the evening. Madame de Sarria was unsuited with the part of Fuchisia Leach, the American heiress ; she looked too matronly, and made the character more vulgar than was needful. The Duchess de Sonnaz of Miss L. Dale was absolutely bad. As a whole the performance dragged. After the third act, the audience suddenly became enthusiastic and excited, not about the performers, but about the characters ; they loudly applauded the exponents of virtue, while the unfortunate representatives of vice were roundly hissed.

On the 23rd of April, "The Busy Bees" swarmed to the Town Hall, Kilburn, on behalf of the Orphanage of Mercy. The attendance was good, the large hall being well filled and the performance excellent. Messrs. J. Palgrave Simpson and Herman C. Merivale's three-act comedy "Alone" occupied the first part of the evening. The blind old Colonel, who, through calumny, has discarded the daughter he loved, and lives lonely in his affliction, was admirably portrayed by Mr. Arthur Ayers : we had not seen him in old parts as yet, and we congratulate him. Stratton Strawless, the unpleasant character in the play, had an intelligent and good representative in Mr. J. N. Lowne. Mr. J. N. Hawkesworth was well suited as the good-tempered Doctor, who restores the Colonel's sight. Mrs. Lennox Browne was the charming young widow *par excellence*. Miss Maude Millet represented the daughter, who returns in disguise to win back her father's love, in a most sympathetic and winning manner ; real "*ingénues*" are rare just now, and Miss Maude Millet looks and acts the pure, innocent girl with rare perfection. Mr. Slee was the lover, and looked remarkably like a fish out of water in this rôle ; he appeared exceedingly uncomfortable. We do not know if Mr. Slee is undergoing a course of military training just now, but the first position of the soldier has evidently a great attraction for him ; he scarcely moves from it, and when he does loosen his hands from his sides he is at a loss what to do with them. Mr. Blake repeated his clever interpretation of O'Callaghan in "His Last Legs." Mr. Blake is an excellent impersonator of Irish character parts ; his delivery is brilliant and amusing, his business always to the point. We noticed his performance last February, and are glad to note that the one thing we took exception to has been modified ; on this occasion O'Callaghan placed his ragged handkerchief on the face of the young man only, when the couple kneel at his feet, though even this we think uncalled for. We believe Tyrone Power, the original exponent of the part, introduced this strange bit of business, but the greatest actors have at times made mistakes, and should not be copied in their faults. The other characters were well sustained by Mr. J. G. La Serre, Mr. Distin-Maddick, Colonel Hervey, Mr. George Nicoll, Master Wood, Miss M. Alleyn Brown, Miss Barclay, Miss Behuk.

Some recent productions, though not important enough for a place in "Our Play-Box," may be briefly mentioned here for future reference. At the Prince's Theatre, on March 29, "The Private Secretary," a farcical comedy in four acts, was brought out. It was adapted by Mr. C. H.

Hawtrey from "Der Bibliothekar" of Von Moser, and turned out to be our old friend "London Assurance" in another guise. It was not very skilfully constructed, nor was the dialogue remarkably brilliant. Mr. H. Beerbohm-Tree gave a really clever study of character as a mild young curate, who is badgered about by every one else in the play. But the efforts of Messrs. W. J. Hill, A. Beaumont, R. C. Carton, H. Reeves Smith, and G. W. Anson, and Misses Tilbury and Lucy Buckstone, Mrs. Stephens and Mrs. Leigh Murray, were wasted.

On April 7, "Our Helen," a burlesque-drama in three acts, by Mr. Robert Reece, was produced at the Gaiety Theatre. Mr. Edward Terry and Miss Farren were in the cast. The piece was withdrawn from the stage within a week.

On April 10, "My Partner," a four-act drama by Bartley Campbell, was played, for the first time in London, at the Olympic Theatre. It is a melodrama of an old-fashioned type, dealing with life in California. Some of the situations are strong, but their effect is spoiled by a superabundance of dialogue, and the characters, for the most part, are unsympathetic. Mr. George Rignold plays the hero with power and pathos, and Miss Alma Murray is gentle and tender as the heroine.

On Easter Monday, April 14, Mr. J. R. Taylor opened Her Majesty's Theatre, at low prices, with a capital revival of "The Ticket-of-Leave Man," by a company including in the cast Mr. Charles Vandenhoff, Mr. Julian Cross, Mr. Edward Righton, Mr. Arthur Stirling, Miss Amy Roselle, Miss Clara Jecks, and a new comer, Miss Grace Huntley, who, in the character of Emily St. Evremond, makes a successful first appearance in London.

From the provinces I receive accounts of the success of clever people and artists appreciated well enough in London. "Nell Gwynne," as played by the excellent company selected by Mr. Harry Jackson, has greatly taken the fancy of playgoers at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and the critics are loud in praise of Miss Constance Loseby and of Mr. Lionel Rignold, who take the characters created by Miss Florence St. John and Mr. Lionel Brough. From a distinctly opposite quarter—namely, Torquay—I learn the success of Miss Rosa Kenny in the part of Valentine in "Proof." Miss Kenny, it is needless to state, is the clever daughter of a brilliant father, Charles Lamb Kenny, critic, wit, and dramatist.

Mr. Oakey Hall, the well-known American writer, is a constant attendant at our theatres, and is contributing a capital series of articles to the New York *Mirror*, chatty, conversational, and witty, without a snarl in them. Why don't some of our would-be facetious writers study this art? How much more pleasant it must be to amuse than to wound. Another intelligent playgoer from the other side is Dr. Robert Laird Collier, who writes such capital letters to the Boston *Herald*, and is a great authority on dramatic art. Dr. Collier has written discriminating and able reviews on the art of Henry Irving and Wilson Barrett.

For once in a way we regret that a true artist should be appreciated at her just value. The regret is merely a selfish one, for we can but rejoice at her gathering fresh laurels, only we should like to lay them at her feet ourselves. Trebelli's success in America has been so immense and universal, that she has consented to enter upon new engagements, and will not return to this country until the end of June, and the English public will till then be deprived of this favourite singer. Admirable in all she does, Mme. Trebelli's *Carmen* has created quite a revolution in America. Most of the critics agree that: "Mme. Trebelli is the best *Carmen* yet seen in America." And one leading paper concludes its criticism with these words:—"It is not too much to say that the New Opera House has never heard such richness of voice as those wonderful notes last evening expelled from the chest of Mme. Trebelli. The house, too, was large, attentive, cultured, appreciative. This woman, who has such wonderful gifts, and who has had such fine opportunities of giving them display, did herself honour. Her voice unquestionably is the richest in quality ever heard in New York." We shall grow jealous of our American friends if they thus take to themselves our best and most valued artists. But while our "managers" are unwise enough not to secure such talent, we must be content to record its success elsewhere.

A very interesting dramatic event took place at the Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh, on the last night of Salvini's engagement there, Saturday, April 12, when Mr. J. B. Howard, the senior proprietor and manager of the theatre, played Iago to the Othello of Signor Salvini. This was done by the special request of the Signor, and Mr. Howard, though naturally nervous at the unusual task, did not feel justified in declining so high an honour. The result was extremely successful, and the crowded house was most enthusiastic in its applause of both artists. Mr. Howard's Iago is a representation full of thought and power. Picturesque in appearance, gallant in manner, bluff in speech, he was the very ideal of an "honest" Iago, who could "smile, and smile, and be a villain." He is to be congratulated on making so good an appearance under such trying conditions, and in company with so magnificent an actor as Salvini. He is the only English actor who has ever appeared under similar circumstances, and should be justly proud of the unique distinction of having played Othello to the Iago of Mr. Irving, and Iago to the Othello of Signor Salvini. The new Lyceum continues to be a great success. Among the engagements already effected for this year are—Miss Mary Anderson, Mrs. Langtry, Mr. J. L. Toole, Mr. Edward Terry, Miss Kate Vaughan, Miss Wallis, Miss Ada Cavendish, Miss Minnie Palmer, the "Claudian" and "Nell Gwynne" companies, &c.



THE THEATRE.



The First Cast of "The Rivals."

BY AUSTIN BRERETON.

THE late Mr. John Bernard, actor, manager, gossip, good-fellow, and secretary of the Beefsteak Club, travelling from Norwich to Portsmouth, toward the latter part of the eighteenth century, delayed his journey in order to be present at the first representation of "The Rivals." Richard Brinsley Sheridan, then barely twenty-four years of age, and having to support not only a pretty house in Orchard Street, Portman Square, but a pretty wife, wrote to his father-in-law, with that hopeful spirit that no misfortune could ever repress, that a comedy of his would be in rehearsal at Covent Garden in a few days. "I have done it," he wrote, "at Mr. Harriss's (the manager's) own request; it is now complete in his hands and preparing for the stage. He and some of his friends also, who have heard it, assure me in the most flattering terms that there is not a doubt of its success. It will be very well played, and Harris assures me that the least shilling I shall get (if it succeeds) will be six hundred pounds. I shall make no secret of it towards the time of representation, that it may not lose any support my friends can give it. I had not written a line of it two months ago, except a scene or two which I believe you have seen in an odd act of a little farce." The play thus spoken of brought to its brilliant author considerably more than six hundred pounds, and it brought him fame as well. At first it staggered, like a giant, under its own weight; it trembled for a moment in the balance, was "cut" by Sheridan—liberal-handed in this, as in everything else—and, after a short, sharp, struggle, blossomed into a lasting success. This was probably the most joyful period in the life of its author, but the cup of happiness had its dash of bitterness, for old Thomas Sheridan, still at war with his son, watched the progress of the play at its

initial performance, silently, and was prepared to witness the failure of the youthful dramatist. The representation of "The Rivals" was a trying experiment. The house was packed with the supporters of the sentimental rubbish and moral poems of the day, and the bustle and spirit of the new comedy were barely tolerated. It was up-hill work at first, but the wit, the life, the infectious humour of Sheridan eventually triumphed. It was the fight of Nature and novelty against affectation and conventionality, and, in the end, Nature got the better of the struggle. The comparative failure of the comedy on the first night is generally and, as I shall endeavour to show, somewhat wrongfully attributed to the actor who impersonated Sir Lucius O'Trigger. In his preface to the play, Sheridan distinctly states that the piece was withdrawn from the stage so that he might "remove those imperfections in the first representation which were too obvious to escape reprehension, and too numerous to admit of a hasty correction." The burden of the preface is, indeed, an excuse for the author's work. The character, and not the impersonation, of Sir Lucius O'Trigger is commented upon, and the performers are thanked "for the exertion of their several abilities." If the success of the play had been jeopardized by the acting of it, it is not unreasonable to suppose that Sheridan, despite all his good-nature, would not have refrained from alluding to the circumstance. The mistake has hitherto been made of supposing that because Lee, the first Sir Lucius, did not re-appear in the comedy, he failed in his acting. That this was not the case we shall presently see. Mr. John Lee was a gentleman who possessed many good qualities and one bad one. He was pleasant to look upon, his voice was musical and powerful, he had had much experience as an actor, and he had played Iago uncommonly well to the Othello of Spranger Barry. All this was very good, but, unfortunately, Mr. Lee held too high an opinion of himself. His self-conceit was absolutely intolerable, and his overweening vanity drew down upon his head the anathemas of every manager he met, and he was renowned for the quickness with which his theatrical engagements were terminated. Eventually not a theatre was open to him save that at Bath, where he retired as acting-manager, and where he supported himself by acting and lecturing, in addition to keeping accounts, until his death. It is easy to imagine that when the pompous Mr. Lee found the audience objected to the character of Sir Lucius, he

resigned the part, for no man likes to be hissed, even for the author of a play. It was not the actor to whom the audience objected, but the character. That Lee did not act badly on the occasion we have the evidence of Bernard, certainly no bad judge in these matters. "Nothing," he writes, "can be more unfounded than the reason which is commonly assigned for the first night's failure of this play—namely, the acting of a Mr. Lee in Sir Lucius O'Trigger. I remember his acting very well; it was very indifferent, especially to the audience, who cared as little about Sir Lucius as did Lydia; it was his juxtaposition with Mrs. Malaprop that brought him into notice—her disease was infectious, and contaminated all that came into her society. The other characters were better drawn than his, and had the advantage of being supported by established favourites; but, under any other circumstances, I will be bound to say Mr. Lee's acting would have passed muster." Sufficient evidence all this, I should say, to prove that the acting of Mr. John Lee in no way perilled the success of the first performance of "The Rivals." The actor who succeeded Lee as Sir Lucius was Laurence Clinch, who, like Sheridan, was a native of Dublin. He played at Drury Lane in "Alexander the Great," but Garrick, disapproving of his acting, allotted him indifferent parts, and he shortly afterwards went to Covent Garden. Sheridan, as is well known, wrote for him his farce of "St. Patrick's Day; or, the Scheming Lieutenant," which was produced at Covent Garden on May 2, 1775. Clinch returned to Dublin, married a rich wife, made his own terms with managers for a while, and, when his wife died and her fortune with her, became submissive, and developed into a useful actor in tragedy and comedy. Having dealt with the first representatives of Sir Lucius O'Trigger, let me give the complete cast of "The Rivals," as it was originally acted at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, on January 17, 1775:—

Sir Anthony Absolute	MR. SHUTER.
Captain Absolute ...	MR. WOODWARD.
Faulkland	MR. LEWIS.
Acres	MR. QUICK.
Sir Lucius O'Trigger	MR. LEE.
Fag	MR. LEE LEWES.

David	MR. DUNSTAL.
Thomas	MR. FEARON.
Mrs. Malaprop ...	MRS. GREEN.
Lydia Languish ...	MISS BARSANTI.
Julia	MRS. BULKLEY.
Lucy	MRS. LESSINGHAM.

The best impersonation in this first performance was that of Ned Shuter, as Sir Anthony Absolute. Shuter was in his element when playing old men, and the broad, breezy character of Sir Anthony was exactly suited to him. Shuter was also the first

representative of Old Hardcastle, Papillon in "The Liar;" Justice Woodcock in "Love in a Village," Druggett, Abrahamides, and Croaker. Nothing reliable is known of his origin. Certain it is that he possessed no education, and it was an effort for him to sign his own name. He made his first appearance at Richmond, in 1744, as Catesby in "Richard III.," and a year later he figured in the bills of Covent Garden, as "Master Shuter," a title which he retained, when, in June, 1746, he acted Osrick, and the third witch in "Macbeth," at Drury Lane, Garrick playing Hamlet and Macbeth. From that time his life was one of hard work and jollification, mixed with a firm belief in the Calvinistic Whitefield. Tate Wilkinson relates how he used to accompany Shuter on Sunday mornings, at six o'clock, to Whitefield's Tabernacle, in Tottenham Court Road; at ten, to another meeting-house in Long Acre; at eleven, back to Whitefield's; at three in the afternoon, to another meeting-house; and, in the evening, to Moorfields. He took the world as he found it: eat, drank, and made merry, and had a pleasant word for every one. His acting was a compound of truth, simplicity, and abundant, luxuriant humour. When he was in the zenith of his career, Mrs. Abington declared that she doated upon him, "the more so, because he is as ugly as myself." He was a great favourite with the people, and was allowed to indulge in enormous liberties with his audience. A comedy, "Wife in the Right," by Mrs. Elizabeth Griffiths failed, and the authoress attributed its non-success to the inability of Shuter, who had not attended rehearsals. On a succeeding night the audience hissed Shuter as soon as he appeared. He addressed the spectators, and asserted that illness alone had kept him from rehearsal; "but, gentlemen," he added, "if there is any one here wants to know if I had been drunk three days before, I acknowledge that I had, and beg pardon for that." The actor was forgiven for his boldness. In his "Rosciad," Churchill says truly:—

" Shuter who never cared a single pin,
Whether he left out nonsense or put in."

Ned Shuter was noted for his clever imitation of the street cries of London. On one occasion he followed through several streets a man whose cry he knew to be peculiar. At last Shuter stopped him, made himself known, and told him he had followed him for half-an-hour in the hope of hearing the familiar cry.

"Why, Master Shuter," said the hawker, "my wife died this morning, and *I can't cry.*" Shuter was excellent as the Miser in Fielding's play, and he once attempted Shylock! He was capital as Falstaff, and was admired in the characters of Scrub, Master Stephen, Launcelot, Peachum, and Sir Francis in "The Busy-Body." His final benefit was in May, 1776, at Covent Garden, when he played Falstaff. He died on the 1st of the following November, in his forty-eighth year, and was interred at St. Paul's, Covent Garden, where rest so many of our departed comedians.

Harry Woodward, the first Captain Absolute, was unequalled as Captain Bobadil, in Ben Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour," and as Harlequin was second only to Rich. He was a tallow-chandler's son, and was born on October 2, 1714. When little more than a child he played Peachum in the juvenile company of "The Beggar's Opera," under Rich, at Lincoln's Inn Fields. In 1730, he commenced his career as an actor, at Goodman's Fields, as Simple, in "The Merry Wives of Windsor." He played with Rich until 1738, when he went over to Drury Lane. He was the original French cook in Dodsley's "Sir John Cockle," and he was besides the first representative of the following parts: the Beau, in "Lethe;" Flash, in "Miss in her Teens;" Jack Meggott, in "The Suspicious Husband;" Dick, in the "Apprentice;" Block, in the "Reprisal;" Lofty, in "The Good-natured Man;" and Captain Ironsides, in "The Brothers." His Slender was a perfect picture of simplicity, and Kitty Clive, admirable as she was as Katherine, was out-shone by the extravagant grotesqueness of his Petruchio. Bobadil was his great part, but he excelled in Marplot, and he was unequalled in Touchstone. In perfection of dressing, in the manner of his time, he was unrivalled; his Mercutio, as regards appearance, was the model of a gentleman of the day. The youthfulness and buoyancy of his style may be gathered from the fact that he was called upon to "create" Jack Absolute when he was only two years short of sixty in age. Indeed, his youth never left him. He was light, bright, and buoyant to the last. "His scamps were perfect in their cool impudence; his modern fops shone with a brazen impertinence; his fops of an older time glistened with an elegant rascality; his mock heroes were stupendously but suspiciously outrageous; his every-day simpletons vulgarly solid; and his Shakespearian characters brimful and running over with Shakespearian spirit." When off the stage,

Woodward bore himself rather seriously ; but he had no sooner got before the foot-lights than his face beamed with merriment and brought him instantly into the favour of his audience. The education which he acquired at the Merchant Taylors' school was of great service to him in private life, although, when away from the theatre, he was silent and reserved. On the stage, his fine voice was invaluable. Harry Woodward ended his career at Covent Garden, on January 13, 1777, as Stephano, in "The Tempest." On the 10th of the following April, Arthur Murphy's comedy, "Know your Own Mind," was acted for his benefit, and, seven days later, this excellent comedian passed from the stage of life. He sunk a fortune with Spranger Barry in the Crow Street Theatre, Dublin, but he contrived to leave the interest of some six thousand pounds to Mrs. Bellamy.

A not unworthy successor to Woodward was William Lewis, the original Jeremy Diddler in "Raising the Wind," and the first Faulkland. He was a Lancashire man, was born in 1748, and, although the son of a linendraper, was of good family. He was educated at Armagh. Resolving to become an actor, he played with success in Dublin and Edinburgh. He made his first appearance in London at Covent Garden, in 1773, as Belcour, in "The West Indian." John Taylor, the author of "Monsieur Tonson," saw him on that night, and he notes that his performance was so spirited and characteristic, his figure so light, and his manner so easy, that he immediately made a hit and became known as "Belcour Lewis." He remained at Covent Garden until May 29, 1809, when he took his farewell in the character of the Copper Captain, the best and most popular of all his parts. Two years later he died, leaving his wife and family a large fortune. His repertory included a wide range of characters. Besides Faulkland and Jeremy Diddler, he created Witmore in Dr. Kenrick's "Duellist ;" Pharnaces and Sir Charles Racket ; Millamour, Percy, and Doricourt ; Sir Thomas Overbury and Count Almaviva ; Herodian and Lackland ; Vapid and Young Rapid ; and the Hon. Tom Shuffleton in "John Bull ;" Modern, in Frederick Reynolds's "Begone Dull Care," Carlos, in "The Revenge," and Posthumus were also played by him. According to Leigh Hunt, he "displayed a combination rarely to be found in acting—that of the fop and the real gentleman. With a voice, a manner, and a person all equally graceful and light, and features

at once whimsical and genteel, he played on to the top of his profession like a plume. He was the Mercutio of the age; in every sense of the word mercurial. His airy, breathless voice, thrown to the stage before he appeared, was the signal of his winged animal spirits; and when he gave a glance of his eye, or touched his fingers at another's ribs, it was the very *punctum saliens* of playfulness and innuendo." When he took leave of the public he did not look more than thirty, although he was more than double that age. On that occasion he was heard to say, with a voice broken by emotion, that for the space of thirty years he had not once incurred the public displeasure. Unlike Woodward, Lewis was a pleasant companion off the stage, and he enlivened the dinner-table with his sunny countenance and his agreeable fund of anecdote. The best portrait of him is in the character of the Marquis in Mrs. Inchbald's comedy "The Midnight Hour," painted by Mr. Shee, afterwards Sir Arthur Shee, and President of the Royal Academy. Lewis had three sons, one of whom became a colonel in the East India Company, another went upon the stage, and the youngest became the proprietor and manager of the Theatre Royal, Liverpool.

A comedian of a different nature to either Woodward or Lewis was John Quick, who figured in the original cast of three of Sheridan's plays. He was the first Bob Acres, Dr. Rosy in "St. Patrick's Day," and Isaac in "The Duenna." During his career he also created these parts:—Tony Lumpkin; Old Hardy, in "The Belle's Stratagem;" Sir George Thunder, in "Wild Oats;" Silky, in "The Road to Ruin;" Don Cæsar, in "A Bold Stroke for a Husband;" Spado, in "The Castle of Andalusia;" Davy, in "Bon Ton;" Perriwinkle, in "A Bold Stroke for a Wife;" and Toby Allspice, in "The Way to get Married." Quick was born on November 5, 1747. He was the son of a brewer in Whitechapel. When fourteen years old he joined a company of strolling players, and made his first appearance at Fulham, playing Altamont, in "The Fair Penitent," with such success that the delighted manager rewarded him with three shillings! Before another four years had passed over his head he had appeared in Hamlet, Romeo, Richard the Third, George Barnwell, Jaffier, and Tancred. But his voice was not suited to tragedy, and, in 1769, he was engaged by Foote for the Haymarket Theatre. Here he made his reputation by a performance of the Beau Mordecai, in "Love à la

Mode," which he acted for Shuter's benefit. As is well-known, he was a favourite actor with George III. After thirty-six years' of labour, he quitted the stage in 1798, to return to it again to play for a few nights at the Lyceum for the benefit of the company rendered destitute by the destruction of Covent Garden Theatre. He retired to Islington, and he nightly repaired to the King's Head tavern, there to chat about his past triumphs, and to drink rum punch, hot and strong. He died at 122, Upper Street, Islington, on April 4, 1831, and, six days' later, his body was deposited by the side of his dearly loved wife, in the vault under the then new chapel of ease to Islington Church, Holloway Road. He lived comfortably in retirement for thirty-three years, and yet was able to leave behind him the sum of six thousand pounds to be divided between his son and daughter. Quick once played Richard for his benefit. He supported the part with good sense and sober judgment throughout, but the peculiarity of his voice occasionally broke forth with such comic effect, that the audience, despite their respect for his talents and character, could not refrain from laughter. It was this curious comedian who, at the funeral of Ned Shuter, being in danger of being pushed into the grave, turned round and requested the crowd not to be so inhuman as to bury the *Quick* with the *dead*.

Charles Lee Lewes, the first Fag, was born in 1740, and was the son of a hosier in Bond Street, who was afterwards reduced to the situation of a letter-carrier in the Post Office. The son frequently acted as deputy for his father. He had a fancy, however, for the stage, and experienced the vicissitudes of a strolling player for a number of years, until he obtained an engagement at Covent Garden to enact Harlequin. He made his first success as Young Marlow, in "She Stoops to Conquer." On the death of Woodward that actor's parts were allotted to him, but he by no means equalled his brilliant predecessor. He quarrelled with his manager, and, in 1783, went over to Drury Lane, where his stay was of brief duration. He took to delivering Stevens's "Lecture on Heads," assisted Jack Palmer at the Royalty Theatre, Wellclose Square, and, on the failure of that unprofitable scheme, took his family to the East Indies, but with no success. On his return he visited Scotland, and during the season of 1792-93 played in Dublin. He was noted for his repartee, but it is said many of his jests were made for him. His affairs becoming embarrassed, a benefit was

given to him at Covent Garden. Mrs. Centlivre's comedy, "The Wonder! a Woman keeps a Secret," was acted, with Lee Lewes as Lissardo, and Dora Jordan—who generously gave her services—in the cast. A few weeks after his benefit (that is to say, on July 23, 1803), Lee Lewes was found dead in bed. He was buried in Pentonville, and, shortly after his decease, his memoirs were published in three volumes. Messrs. Dunstal and Fearon—David and Thomas, in "The Rivals"—were useful but not exalted members of the Covent Garden Company. Fearon died on September 30, 1789.

Of the ladies who appeared in the first cast of "The Rivals," there is not much to be told. Mrs. Green, the first Mrs. Malaprop, the first Duerina, and the original Mrs. Hardcastle, commenced her public career in 1730, and ended it in 1779. She was the daughter of an old actor, John Hippesley, who owed the comical expression of his face to an accidental burn; her brother was Governor Hippesley. Mrs. Green was only excelled in the impersonation of Abigails by Mrs. Clive. Mrs. Bulkley, the original Julia and Miss Hardcastle, was Miss Wilford, the niece of the wife of John Rich, the famous manager. She flourished in London from 1764 to 1789. She was extremely graceful, bright, and pretty. She appeared first as a dancer, then in both tragedy and comedy. She was more fitted by nature for comedy, although even in that she never got beyond mediocrity. A good education and kind friends were wasted upon her. She married, and deserted, Mr. Bulkley, a violinist at Covent Garden. Miss Barsanti (Lydia Languish) was a young lady of high spirits and keen knowledge of character. She was of an Italian family, and the pupil of Dr. Burney. Her imitations of English and Italian singers were extremely clever. She appeared at Covent Garden in 1772, in a prelude specially written for the purpose by George Colman, the elder. She afterwards married Richard Daly, manager of the Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin, a better manager than an actor, and a quick-tempered, good-hearted fellow. Of Mrs. Lessingham (Lucy), the less said the better. In her early days she was acquainted with the poet Herrick, and lived in Shoe Lane, Holborn. She was pretty, and of some merit as a comic actress. Her Mrs. Sullen was accounted a good performance.

Ten Years Ago!

WHERE were you, love, ten years ago?
Alone I saw a land of blue;
Then wandered through the blossom-snow,
And dreamed a woman such as you.
So like the picture! only turn,
Love's breezes shake the lilac tree;
I called you then across the fern,
But there was none to answer me!
God's world was very glad, you know,
But I was sad ten years ago!

What was your life ten years ago?
You woman with the haunting face;
With eyes as soft and voice as low,
Who came in fancy to this place.
You touched my face, and took my hand,
And whispered of a life to be,
Some day in distant flower-land,
When calling you would answer me.
What was the hope that seemed to grow,
In dreams of you ten years ago?

Where are we now? Ten years ago
We were two beings but apart;
But now, since I have loved you so,
You take me closely to your heart.
Listen one moment, ere we part
Beneath this gold laburnum tree,
Let me knock gently at your heart,
And hear if you will answer me.
Thank God that you have made me know
The love I dreamed ten years ago!

C. S.

May, 1884.



Calls.

BY GODFREY TURNER.

TO deprive acting of its illusion is to strip from it all reasonable claims to be regarded as an art. If we are not carried away by the emotions of the scene, if we are no more diverted by them than we might be diverted by a juggler with his cups, balls, knives, plates, and basins, or by a company of performing poodles, or by one of those peculiarly dull and senseless affairs—of which we have now had for a time nearly the last—called “burlesques,” what is there to distinguish the actor from the mountebank, or to debar the mountebank from an equal share of artistic honours with the actor? Let us, in kindness, as well as in caution, remember how slight and slippery a hold even the best acting has upon the dignity implied in that little word *Art*. Except in the fraternity itself, or among writers who take liberties with language, I cannot remember that the word was ever applied with any weight of authority to the magic skill of a Talma, a Bensley, a Siddons, a Mars, a Kemble, a Kean, or an O’Neil. *Art* is creative; and though we sometimes hear that a part has been “created” by the performer, I must confess a strong impression that this is one of the liberties of language just referred to. To vivify and bring into prominence a poor and dull “creation” is the work of a skilful actor; and in this he merits praise, where the author, who really created the part, or stole and spoilt it, but at least supplied its outline for the actor to fill in, merely deserves contempt. The “art of acting” is a phrase of late growth. Before its time much had been written concerning “Shakespeare’s art;” little that I have seen concerning Garrick’s. Nor do I doubt that “Davy” himself would have raised those wonderful brows wonderingly to hear Reynolds, or Thornton, or Johnson, or Goldsmith call him an “artist.”

But, admitting, as I am willingly disposed to admit, the warrantable application of the word *Art* to the best and highest class of acting, let me yet venture to point out the extremely nice perils of the tenure. If we, the beholders, are ready with our

poor imagination to piece-out and amend the imperfections of the show, we have a right to insist that those imperfections be of the unavoidable kind only ; that they be not impertinent or obtrusive ; that they offer no open affront to our understanding. If the illusion of the stage and the action be not maintained with the utmost good faith, it is there that the art fails, and that the actor loses every scintilla of property in that bright word "artist." Now, by a foolish custom which has grown up between him and the audience—between vanity on one side the footlights and stupidity on the other—he does forfeit his title every night. I will not dwell on the degraded custom, among "comic" actors, of offering deliberate insults to illusion by punning on the names of the company, by chaffing the work of the scene-painter, and by other mountebank tricks having reference, not to any "necessary question of the play," but to the mechanical business of its representation—to technical details which should be most carefully kept out of sight, not dragged into the glare of coarse, false ridicule. This is an "art," manifestly filched, at second or third hand, from the humour of the music-halls. It is so low, so dreary and idiotic that the "artists" must surely be paid enormous salaries for undertaking it. Enough of it here and now. But the illusion for which I contend, as the only conceivable ground on which to rest a plea or an apology for the artistic consideration of acting, is commonly sacrificed by actors who would not stoop to such pitiable shifts for raising a laugh as gagging about scenery and the details of stage-management. As Menenius Agrippa says, "I shall tell you a pretty tale." It will be in no breach of confidence, and I will name no names ; though even if I did there would be little if any harm, seeing that the story is very creditable to those involved in it, and shows them to be actors concerned in preserving that dramatic illusion in which, I repeat, the histrionic art solely and simply consists. Well, then, to my illustration. There is a certain piece, a medley of song, dance, and eccentric comedy, with a strong infusion of melodrama, such as we get now and again from the Land of the West—a kind of a ballet-vaudeville, with a Porte St. Martin plot, chopped and mixed in. One of the scenes in this hybrid presentation has a song, which is capitally acted as well as sung, the performer playing a game of romps all the while with a little boy. Seldom has anything prettier of its kind been seen or heard on the stage. It may be

that the words of the song are poor. It seemed to me, decidedly, that they were so. All the more credit to the singing actor for making his dramatic ditty so pleasantly effective. He finishes what I may call, operatically speaking, the *scena*, by galloping off with the boy on his back. Warmly congratulating the performer on his career of popularity in this part, one of the soundest actors of our day noticed a little change which had been effected, not for the better, in the "business" of the song. Formerly, when the singer made his exit with the child on his back, there was no departure in the youngster's demeanour from the natural action of a boy revelling in a bit of spontaneous fun. But of late the *illusion*, which was the whole gist of the thing, has been destroyed. Instead of riding off naturally on his two-legged steed, the child had been told to turn round and kiss his hand towards the audience. It was this shocking violation of art that the older and more experienced player pointed out to his friend. Taking the hint in good part, this last said, "You are quite right. It spoils the truth of the situation." And then he added, in the tone of one who regrets and confesses a blunder, "I am to blame for telling the child to do that."

Yes, it was a blunder, no doubt; and I can only hope it has been by this time rectified. Whatever tends to the re-transformation of an actor, from the part he is playing, into himself, is a blunder. To unmask him is a blunder and an injury also. That he should be willingly unmasked, that he should with his own too ready hand sweep away the illusion which invests him with heroic significance, is a proof that, however loudly he may vaunt himself an artist, he cares very little for art. He cares nothing for it when he is in haste to accept that poor compliment, now meaningless, a call in front of the curtain. Of all the imbecile customs of modern playgoing, this custom is the most lamentably bereft of reason. To clamour for the resuscitation of

"The gentle lady married to the Moor;"

to call up the grim-visaged Otheilo whom we have just seen fall by his own death-dealing hand; to vex the ghosts of "Juliet and her Romeo," by summoning them to stand bowing and smirking and picking up the most monstrous bouquets—what is all this vulgar, conventional folly but to "break that fine phantasmagoria of the brain," and to "dissolve the spirit of enchantment in the

very palace of enchantment?" I remember how reluctant Macready was to obey these calls; and how Phelps, after him, would let them die out, or, if they were persisted in with peremptory increase of noise, would wrap round him a voluminous cloak, step forward a foot or so, bow, and retire. No crossing the stage then. Now it is nothing less than a parade of the whole company that will suffice; and it is the trick to bring on the small people first, and so to provoke a *crescendo* of applause, culminating in the grand climacteric roar when the favourite that should first be called comes last. But the truth is, no one performer *is* called in these days. The honour, which to be an honour at all, should be exceptional, not a mere matter of course, was very unmistakably conferred in those times of which I speak. The recipient was always summoned by name. Well do I remember with what "a mouthful" each gallery spectator bawled the patronymic, not euphonious, of the Sadler's Well's manager and leading tragedian. The house resounded with "Phelps! Phelps! Phelps!" There could be no mistake at that time in the feeling and intention of the audience, except when honours were divided. I can remember, too, as a boy, seeing Edwin Forrest at the Princess's. It was said that a cabal had been formed to oppose him. I knew nothing about that; and as I honestly did not like his acting, I could not but think the audience generally were of my mind, without having been drilled, or bribed, or coerced into disapproval. The play was "Macbeth;" and Macduff was acted well, though not brilliantly, by Mr. Charles Fisher. I had seen better, as indeed I had seen worse—much worse. At the end I did not feel moved to call for any one; and for the first time it occurred to me as a painful fact that a bad spirit prevailed in the house when loud cries for Fisher arose, completely drowning the weak demonstration in favour of Forrest. I had seen nothing so bad in the Thane of Glamis as to warrant snubbing, nor anything so meritorious in the Thane of Fife as to demand glorification. The events of that night recur to my mind as a natural reminiscence of times when to call an actor forward was to call him by his audible, articulate name. A mere clapping of hands, however general and enthusiastic, seems to me a different thing; nor can I understand how any man or woman, without a breach of self-respect, should come habitually to regard general applause as a tribute to be particularly appropriated. Perhaps the tedious practice, to which I have adverted, of bringing

the whole company forward, not only at the end of the play, but on the close of each act, is defensible on the score of its indiscriminate praise, and its even-handed distribution of regular and therefore valueless compliments.



Thespis en Route.

BY W. DAVENPORT ADAMS.

IT is not undesirable, I think, to make an occasional review of the condition of "theatricals" in the "provinces." London, of course, must always remain the head-quarters of the British Stage, for it is the habitat of the heads of the dramatic and histrionic professions, and it is there that the most important theatrical productions take place. It is the centre at once of dramatic writing, theatrical performance, and theatrical criticism, and, as such, must always usurp a large measure of the attention of those who study and enjoy the theatre. At the same time, it is not well to talk and write as if London were the one place of moment in theatrical affairs. All the good actors cannot be in the metropolis at one and the same time; on the contrary, very many of them are rarely seen there. There are "first nights" in the "country" as well as in town; it was at Leeds that Miss Ellen Terry first played Beatrice, and it was at Glasgow that she first played Frou Frou. And even if this were not so, the play-going of the millions out of London cannot be a matter of entire indifference. Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester (with its traditions of Calvert), Edinburgh (with its memories of Wyndham), Glasgow, Dublin, and Belfast—these, it will be admitted, are places of some size and position; and, it will be allowed, there is even something to interest in the theatrical pabulum enjoyed by such towns as Brighton, Bristol, Leicester, Nottingham, Sheffield, Bradford, Hull, and Newcastle, to name no others. The "provinces" have at least the superiority in numbers. London, we all acknowledge, is a very big place indeed; but, after all, there are more people—there are more actors—out of it than in it, and it is not ungrateful sometimes for the additions to its list of

authors and actors which are made by the somewhat pooh-poohed "country." Nay, the "provinces" have this further advantage over London—that whereas the Londoner rarely knows, or cares to know, much about "theatricals" in the "country," the "provincial" is often as well acquainted with London "theatricals" as Londoners themselves. And, moreover, the "provincial" often acquires experience in which the Londoner shows himself deficient. To take only one instance : there was much rejoicing in London some time ago over the discovery of Miss Laura Linden. Here was a "find" indeed ; London had suddenly acquired another actress ! But the poor "provincial" had long known the merit of Miss Linden, who had made herself popular throughout the "country" as the irresistible "slavey" in "Our Boys" and the badly treated heroine of "Imprudence."

One may be excused, then, for devoting a page or two to the "provinces," and to the principal travelling companies by which they have been visited during the past spring season. It would take too long even to enumerate the names of all the Thespian bodies which are, or have been, *en route* through the "country," and I shall have to content myself with making as comprehensive a selection as I can.

Beginning with the troupes devoted to the production of legitimate, melo-, or what is called comedy-, drama, one has to admit at the outset that the bright particular star of the season is Miss Mary Anderson, who has been making quite a triumphal progress through such cities as Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester, and Birmingham. Miss Anderson has had the good sense and good taste to take with her a number of competent performers, including Mr. J. H. Barnes, Mr. W. Rignold, Mr. W. Farren, jun., Mr. H. Kemble, Mr. John Benn, Mr. R. Buckstone, Mrs. Edward Saker, Mrs. Billington, Mrs. Charles Calvert, and Miss Abington. But excellently as she has been supported (in all her London repertoire), she has herself, of course, been the great attraction, and she has everywhere drawn crowded houses. Her beauty and her grace have carried all before them, and rarely has the public paused, apparently, to discuss how far her impersonations are the result of study or inspiration, or of both. On the whole, her provincial company may be pronounced superior to that which she had at the Lyceum—which may be taken as a compliment to the "country." Then, after Miss Anderson, comes

"Claudian," and after "Claudian" comes "In the Ranks." Both these pieces are excellently cast. In the former, Mr. Leonard Boyne undertakes the title part, Mr. Dewhurst is the Holy Clement, Mr. McIntyre is the Tetrarch, Mr. D'Esterre Guinness is the Agazil, Miss C. Grahame is the Almida, and Miss Maggie Hunt the Serena. The two ladies are rather pleasing than powerful ; but the gentlemen are altogether good. Messrs. Dewhurst, McIntyre, and Guinness being, in my opinion, distinctly more successful than the London representatives of their rôles. Mr. Boyne makes, as Claudian, a considerable stride in his profession, evincing qualities and capacity which he had not hitherto had an opportunity of exhibiting. Minor parts are also very acceptably performed by Miss Clara Deveine, Miss Lennard, Mr. W. E. Blatchley, and Mr. R. Dalton. The staging of the piece is admirable, being very little short of the brilliancy and completeness of the original. In "In the Ranks" the best work done is naturally that which is thrown into it by Miss Mary Rorke—a very acceptable impersonation. Miss Annie Irish, and Miss Clara Dillon also give their assistance, and the chief male parts are played by Mr. Henry George, Mr. S. Charteris, and Mr. Henry Moxon. The play is thoroughly well put upon the boards, and it has had a popular success very little inferior, if at all, to that which has everywhere attended "Claudian." The last-named drama, it was prophesied, would be above the heads of the "provinces." It has not been found so, though the press has not hesitated to point out faults in the conception of the piece. It may be noted that "The Lights o' London" and "The Silver King" (two companies of the latter) have been and still are on tour, Mr. Bucklaw playing Harold Armitage, and Mr. E. H. Brooke Wilfred Denver. "Fédora" has been taken into the "provinces" by Miss Laura Villiers, who enacts the title rôle, supported by Mr. Arthur Dacre as Loris, and by Messrs. A. M. Denison and W. H. Day, in minor parts. Miss Villiers is naturally much indebted to her predecessors in the part, but she shows a thorough conception of it, as well as considerable capacity for the representation of strong emotion. Her performance is impressive and effective. Mr. Dacre has a certain measure of power, but lacks distinction. The Princess Olga of the cast is unfortunately not at all adequate. Shakespeare, I regret to say, is being played but little in the "provinces." Mr. Barry Sullivan concluded his tour some time ago, and Mr. T. C. King and

Miss Alleyn are, I believe, both "resting" at this moment. Mr. Sullivan's tour was, of course, one of great success, no other performer of the legitimate being so popular in the country. Miss Ethel Herbert was, if I remember rightly, his "leading lady." Mr. T. C. King has met with the reception due to the soundness of his method, and Miss Alleyn has had the honour of being selected to supply the programme at the Shakespearean Festival at Stratford. She has appeared of late with much ability and effect, as Imogen, and Isabella, in "Measure for Measure."

"Over the Cliff" (by Alf. Robins) is being played with a cast of which Mr. W. H. Brougham and Miss Violet Temple are the chief features. "Sunshine and Shadow" (by R. Palgrave) is being represented by Miss Florence Wade, Miss Dolores Drummond, Miss Lilian Dudley, and others; and Miss Gertrude Norman is putting before the public (with the assistance, notably, of Miss Nellie Lingard, a promising young actress), a new version of "East Lynne." Among the "Rag and Bones" company I note the names of Mrs. Alfred Mellon, Miss Ryder, Mr. Edward Price, and Miss Kate Varley (a clever and useful artist). "Follies of the Day" has the aid of Mr. Lewis J. Ward, and Messrs. John and Fred Walton. Mr. Fred Gould has added "All for Her" to the repertoire of his company, which includes that excellent comedian Mr. Robert Nelson. Mr. Charles Sullivan (with Mr. T. Newry), Mr. Charles Dornton (with Miss Josephine St. Ange, Miss Page, and Miss Clara Rose), Miss Ethel Arden (a meritorious actress), Miss Marriott, and Mr. Frank Harvey (with Messrs. T. W. Benson, H. Andrews, and J. Carter Edwards, Miss Annie Baldwin and Miss Eyre Robson), are all "outroad" with their well-known specialities; and "Youth" and "Taken from Life" (Mr. W. H. Hallatt and Miss Ethel Hope) are being represented under the auspices of Messrs. Holt and Wilmot. The companies producing "The Danites," "Uncle Tom's Cabin," "Recommended to Mercy," "Through my Heart First," "Queen's Evidence," and "After Dark," can but be mentioned. There are others (popular in the smaller theatrical towns) which it is not necessary to enumerate.

Coming next to comedy, I do not find the "novelties" numerous. "Confusion," "The Millionaire," and "Impulse"—these, I suppose, are the most recent of the importations into the "country." The last-named has gratifying justice done to it.

Mr. C. W. Garthorne takes Mr. Kendal's rôle ; Miss Fanny Enson Mrs. Kendal's ; Miss Helen Cresswell, Miss Dietz's ; Miss Maria Daly, Mrs. Gaston Murray's ; Mr. J. H. Darnley, Mr. Arthur Dacre's ; Mr. P. C. Beverley, Mr. Wenman's ; and Mr. A. Chevalier, Mr. H. Kemble's. The result is very enjoyable ; the artists are all competent, and the comedy, which seems to be much liked in the "country," loses little by the transplanting. Mr. Darnley's is a particularly promising performance. "The Millionaire" is by no means so well cast, Miss Hilda Hilton, who was an effective Lady Henmarsh, has left the troupe, and the burden of the piece is borne mainly by Mr. John Wainwright, Mr. Austin Melford, and Miss Alice Hamilton, all of whom do fairly well. In the "burlesque" that is played after the comedy, Miss Alice Aynsley Cook is heard to much advantage. "Confusion" is represented by Messrs. W. H. Wallace, R. Edgar, E. M. Robson, Francis Hawley, and Charles Cooper, Miss Alexes Leighton, Miss Kate Lee, and Mrs. W. Sidney. In the hands of these ladies and gentlemen it is quite safe, and the piece "goes" with even more spirit than at the Vaudeville, Mr. Robson and Miss Kate Lee being especially successful. Of the comedies which are no longer novelties, even in the "provinces," may be mentioned "Our Regiment," "The Parvenu," "The Guv'nor," "Mother-in-Law," "The Member for Slocum," "The Snow Ball," and "Our Boys." Of these "Our Regiment" and "The Guv'nor" are particularly well done. In the former Mr. Gerald Moore plays his original part, and other rôles are undertaken by Mr. G. Cannings, Mr. J. W. Bradbury, Miss Kate Hodson, Miss Effie Liston, and Miss Rosie St. George. The consequence is a representation of much merit and attractiveness. In "The Guv'nor," Mr. John Rouse has not the mingled refinement and unctuousness of Mr. J. F. Young, whose old Macclesfield ought to have been seen in London ; but Miss E. Brunton, Miss G. Robertson, Miss A. Brunton, and Miss Darncombe, in the chief female parts, leave nothing to be desired. In "The Parvenu" the only impersonations that approach adequacy are those of Miss Susan Rignold and Mr. Jones Finch (an actor of the good old school). In "Our Boys" Mr. T. Bolton, who, if I remember rightly, was not so very long ago playing *jeune premier* rôles, is now the Perkyn Middlewick. Mr. Edward Compton and Mr. Charles Collette are both renewing old successes, Mr. Compton in such pieces as "The Road to Ruin" and "David Garrick," and

Mr. Collette in "The Liar," "My Awful Dad," "The Colonel," and other pieces in his well-known repertory. Mr. Compton has been winning special laurels as one of the Dromios in "The Comedy of Errors," Mr. W. Calvert being his double, and Miss Virginia Bateman (Mrs. Compton) the Adriana. The play is judiciously arranged, save that the finales to the acts are of a very modern complexion. Mr. Collette's company is that with which he has recently appeared in town. Mr. and Mrs. H. S. Dacre are producing translations of French farcical comedy, and Mr. G. M. Wood is playing a round of the "legitimate," supported agreeably by Miss Marguerite St. John, a young lady of whom I do not remember to have heard before, but who gives promise of much excellence in the future. Talking of farcical comedy, I am reminded of the success gained in the "country" by "The Three Hats" and "Old Flames." In the former Mr. G. Walton, Mr. G. R. Budd, Mr. A. Whittaker, and Miss Retta Walton play, with much vivacity; in the latter Mr. Maltby is humorous in his well-known manner. Miss Annie Hill plays gracefully, Miss Bella Cuthbert and Miss Carrie Braham are each amusing in their way, and a creditable appearance is made by a young lady who, I believe, is a sister of Mr. H. Reeves Smith. Another piece recently introduced to the "provinces" is "Silver-Guilt," which, going in the wake of "The Silver King," has aroused hearty laughter. The company, which is a strong one, includes Mr. R. Brough, Miss Helen Hastings, and Miss Florence Trevelyan, the two former having been in the original cast. It is difficult to class "La Vie," but, accepting it as a burlesque, I may record here its successful presentation out of London by a company including Miss Maud Branscombe (who has recently developed an agreeable singing voice), Miss Nellie Coombes, and Mr. E. J. Lonnen. Of the troupes producing "The Gay City," "Fun on the Bristol," "Flint and Steel," "Frivolity," "Turtle Doves" and "Bears not Beasts," "Round the Clock," "An Adamless Eden," and "Posterity," it is not necessary to say much. Indeed, I would only note that in one of the "Fun on the Bristol" troupes there are two artists—Mr. R. Purdon and Miss M. Faudelle—who have a genuine turn for burlesque, and whose talents in that direction deserve recognition.

In opera—"grand," "English," and "comic"—the provinces are at present rich. By this time Mr. Carl Rosa will have concluded his brilliant tour, but not before producing the new work,

"The Canterbury Pilgrims," twice at Birmingham, and possibly elsewhere. The chief "hit" of the tour now over, has been "Carmen" (with Madame Marie Roze, in her admirable performance); but "Colomba" and "Esmeralda" have been very popular, and the ordinary repertoire of the company has been drawn upon with success, Mr. McGuckin, Mr. Davies, Mr. Ludwig, Mr. Crotty, Madame Burns, Miss Perry, and Miss Burton, well sustaining their reputation. A pleasant incident of the season, by the way, has been Mr. Rosa's purchase of the Court Theatre, Liverpool, of which Mr. J. D. McLaren will be the manager. The Royal English Opera Company, the Cave-Ashton Opera Company, and a troupe headed by Mr. Durand, have all been heard in "the country"—the first, including such vocalists as Madame Cole, Madame Gaylor, and Messrs. Turner and Packard; Madame Cave-Ashton being assisted by Mr. Faulkner Leigh; and Mr. Durand having the aid of Madame Mariani, Miss Parkinson, Mr. W. Parkinson, and Mr. W. Bolton. Turning to comic opera, I may note, as novelties in the provinces, "Estrella," "Nell Gwynne," and "Princess Ida." The first-named started with Mdlle. Cornèlie D'Anka as prima donna, but that clever lady gave way afterwards to Miss Dora Wiley, an American vocalist, whom I have not had an opportunity of hearing. The chief male parts are taken by Mr. Arnold Breedon and Mr. George Temple, the latter of whom does not seem to me to be well-suited in this, his latest assumption. The libretto of the opera has been generally condemned as weak, but the sprightly and musicianly character of the score has been admitted. "Nell Gwynne" is well cast. Mr. Bolini is Buckingham; Mr. Esmond, Rochester; Mr. Lane Henry, Falcon; Mr. Percy Compton, Weasel; Mr. Lionel Rignold, the Beadle; Miss Constance Loseby, Nell Gwynne; Miss Alice Esden, Clare; Miss Laura Clement, Jesamine; and Miss Marie D'Altra, Marjorie. All these artists are experienced and trustworthy, and the piece consequently goes *à merveille*. Messrs. Rignold and Compton are very amusing, and the vocalization of Miss Loseby and Miss Clement is of the most agreeable kind. The opera is handsomely "put on," and the tour is, so far as can be judged, eminently successful. Two companies have been sent out with "Princess Ida," and in No. 1, Miss Esmè Lee sings charmingly as the Princess; Mr. David Fisher, jun., is a truly humorous King Gama; and Mr. Billington is, to my mind,

a better Hildebrand than Mr. Barrington. Mr. Frederic is excellent, but Mr. Rowan's performance is too rough and obtrusive. Mr. D'Oyly Carte, it may be stated, has two "Patience" and two "Iolanthe" companies, among the most prominent and praiseworthy members of which are Miss Josephine Findlay, Miss Elsie Cameron, and Mr. G. B. Browne. Of the older comic operas, "Les Cloches de Corneville," "Olivette," "Billee Taylor," and "Les Manteaux Noir," are all on tour. In the first, Mr. Shiel Barry is playing his original part—hardly, I think with all his old power. The cast also includes Miss Clara Merivale, Miss Emma Chambers, and Mr. Edward Marshall, all competent artists. In "Olivette," Mr. Ward Oliver, Mr. W. G. Bedford, and Miss Amy Grundy, are the chief vocalists, whilst Mr. T. Wilson, as the Duc, proves himself an able and finished comedian. In "Billee Taylor," Mr. J. Danvers plays cleverly and amusingly, but by no means realizes the character he is supposed to represent. The performance generally is hardly adequate, though Miss Julia St. George is very pleasing. Nor can it be said that "Les Manteaux Noir" has perfect justice done to it by the company of Mr. T. D. Yorke, though Miss Anderson is vivacious as the Queen.

As most people are aware, theatrical entertainments in the "provinces" are almost wholly supplied by itinerant troupes. The list of "stock" companies is a small one. It has, however, received a notable addition lately, in the case of the Prince's Theatre, Manchester, where, on May 12, "Money" was produced by a body of performers brought together under the auspices of Mr. John Hollingshead; up to the time of writing, the experiment has not proved fortunate, nor do I think success could be anticipated for it. That Manchester would support a "stock" combination is very probable; but it will hardly accept one of which Mr. Louis Calvert, a comparatively inexperienced actor, is the "leading-man," and in which the only artists known at all to fame—metropolitan or provincial—are Miss Kate Bishop, Miss Agnes Thomas, Mr. Charles Fawcett, Mr. George Blythe, and Mr. Harry Cane. These ladies and gentlemen are all excellent in their various departments, but they scarcely suffice to make up a stock company with which Manchester will long be contented.

To my Guardian Angel.

[Translated from "A mon Ange Gardien" by EMILE SOUVESTRE.]

"Bon ange gardien ayez pitié de moi."—PRIÈRES DE FÉNÉLON.

GOOD angel, save me from a fate unkind,
From loving him, for love is so much pain ;
And yet I cannot from my heart unwind
The thought of him. Ah me ! to hate were gain.
When he his love would tell and mine entreat,
In vain I say him nay ; he weeps, I grieve ;
I would not love him, but his voice so sweet !—
Angel watch over me.

The turtle-dove, his gentle gift to me,
Now I do love (and yet I know not why),
I find her ever tender, sad as he ;
Caressing her brings him to memory.
Musing one morn, I plucked some flow'rs to tell
My fate—they say flow'rs are to lovers kind—
Their petals falling said, "I love him well."
Angel watch over me.

To hear his voice, to see him is such joy :
Dearer than any is his sister fair,
How sweet at eve to clasp the baby-boy,
His namesake, to my breast, and rock him there.
Should woman e'er on him sweet praise bestow,
A lingering sorrow fills my mind and soul,
And I do hate her—why I do not know.
Angel watch over me.

The very glades he loves, I cherish too,
His chosen colour 's now to me most fair,
His words I breathe, and throbs my heart anew,
Nor care to sing, save his own fav'rite air.
I treasure still his flower that once did blow
So fragrant, sweet—alas ! full well I know
Upon my heart it withered long ago.
Angel watch over me.

M. E.



Our Musical-Box.

THE musical "events" of the past month have not been as numerous or interesting as usual during the London spring season. A certain measure of the unwonted tameness characterizing May, 1884, in opera-house and concert-room alike, was probably attributable to the gloom cast over society by the Duke of Albany's sudden death; but the main cause of an almost phenomenal dulness has been the lack of novelty, in works as well as executants. Nothing new of any moment has been brought out save a symphony of Brahms, one of the finest works that have been introduced to public notice for some years past. No *débutant*, vocal or instrumental, has taken the town by storm. Dr. Hans von Buelow has been "reciting" on the pianoforte as eccentrically and incorrectly as of yore. The Richter Concerts have once more gone over their old ground with, I regret to say, less *éclat* and success—at least, from a pecuniary point of view—than in former years; a falling-off that is chiefly ascribable to a too faithful adherence, on the part of the great Viennese conductor, to the original scheme upon which he framed these excellent musical entertainments. The programmes of succeeding seasons resemble one another too closely to attract a public far less conservative or steadfast in its tastes than foreign musicians are apt to imagine. Herr Richter has wisely added two or three numbers to his old familiar stock of Wagnerian arrangements; but it might be desirable that he should draw more freely than hitherto upon the ample store of contemporary compositions, and persevere courageously in the purpose to which he pledged himself some years ago—viz., to produce the orchestral works of living English writers with such frequency as to impart healthy encouragement and impulse to "native talent." By carrying out this laudable project he could not fail to acquire a more lasting and remunerative popularity than that which is likely to accrue to him from persistent repetitions, however admirably executed, of selections from Wagner's operas, of Liszt's tricky Rhapsodies, or even—I trust that the orthodox portion of Herr Richter's *clientèle* will pardon me for saying so—of Beethoven's immortal symphonies.

In conformity with its custom of late years, during the anti-Patti section of its annual operatic season, the Covent Garden management throughout the past month regaled a score or so of thin and frigid audiences with an equal number of third and fourth-rate performances. Never hitherto has it been so manifest as this year that the glories of Italian opera are departed. Once or twice—notably on the occasion of Madame Durand's appearance in the reproduction of "Gioconda," a work that seems to have taken strong hold upon public fancy—the house was fairly filled; but on other occasions the attendance has been proportionate to the quality of the entertainments provided by the *impresa*. Mr. Gye's "revivals" were less

successful than they might have proved had they been more judiciously selected and better cast. Boito's "Mefistofele" does not draw in Italy, despite its composer's great personal popularity in his native country, and has never achieved anything more than a mild *succès d'estime* here. It fell flat on May 15, partly by reason of its intrinsic shortcomings, and partly because its two leading characters—the title-rôle and the "doubled" part of Marguerite-Helen—were sustained by artists to whom the advantages of rehearsal had been denied. As might have been expected, the performance was in many respects a bad one, despite the praiseworthy efforts of both "substitutes" to grapple with the difficulties of the situation. Another unfortunate revival was "Lucia." Madame Sembrich is physically unsuited to the part of the fragile, yielding Lucy Ashton, and her singing, though correct and finished, is singularly unsympathetic. Edgardo has seldom been more tamely impersonated than by Signor Marconi, whose acting and vocalization barely attained the modern tenor average of inoffensive mediocrity. Not the least significant symptom of the decadence of Italian opera in London is the lack of interest displayed by Covent Garden audiences in tenor parts, as well as in the incompetent artists engaged to represent the heroes of lyric drama. As a matter of fact, the operatic tenor has lost the position he formerly occupied in public favour, and is no longer a primary attraction. Upon the *prima donna* alone depend the impresario's fortunes. The *primo tenore*, although still a tolerably expensive luxury, brings little money to the managerial exchequer, and is, commercially as well as artistically, *à la baisse*. Demand is said to create supply; and the lamentable deficiency in efficient, not to say first-rate, operatic tenors, is probably ascribable to the circumstance that, somehow or other, that class of vocalist has ceased to awaken enthusiasm in the patrons of the opera-house. To return, however, to Covent Garden. On the 17th ult., "L'Etoile du Nord" was produced, with Madame Sembrich in the part of Caterina, and otherwise a weak cast. "Caparisons are odorous," as theatrical managers know to their cost; and I cannot but think that Mr. Gye was ill-advised to put forward even so skilful a *cantatrice* as the Hungarian *prima donna* in a rôle that London, for fifteen years past, has been accustomed to identify, wholly and solely, with the Queen of Song, Madame Adelina Patti.

I observe that the "Musical Reform Association," in a periodical addressed to "the student and the million," recommends for general adoption a new system of notation, styled "The Keyboard Stave." I have carefully looked into this proposed innovation, which at first sight appears to be characterized by an engaging simplicity, and to sweep away a host of technical complications that certainly render sight-reading an extraordinarily difficult achievement. For instance, it does away with signs innumerable, including those essential marks that indicate sharps, flats, and naturals; it abolishes clefs, differences of key, and other such important guides to the significance of the written or printed note. The result of these extirpations I do not hesitate to say is hopeless chaos. The notes are strung upon lines representing the key-board, adjusted sideways. Of these lines there are eighteen. The bass and treble notation is identical; no distinctions exist,

pointing out to either hand of the player its position upon the instrument ; octaves above or below the stave have apparently to be derived from the reader's inner consciousness. No note is what it seems to be, to the eye accustomed to the staves heretofore in use ; single intervals look like thirds, and the chromatic scale's continuity is interrupted by gaps of a perplexing and alarming width. A serious attempt to master this terrible system of notation might well unsettle the most evenly-balanced brain, and its general adoption for the instruction of youth in the "sweet science" would probably people a hundred Earlswoods with incurable juvenile idiots. I venture to protest most earnestly against the aiming of so deadly a blow at the intellect of the rising generation. The "Musical Reform Association" should not forget that "*le mieux est l'ennemi du bien*," or that "Let well alone," is one of the most salutary of proverbs.

WM. BEATTY-KINGSTON.

"THE CANTERBURY PILGRIMS."

Opera in Three Acts, written by GILBERT A BECKETT, composed by C. VILLIERS STANFORD.
Performed for the first time by the Carl Rosa Opera Company, at the Theatre Royal,
Drury Lane, London, on Monday, April 28, 1884.

Sir Christopher	MR. LUDWIG.	Wat	MR. C. STEWART.
Hal-o'the-Chepe	MR. BARRINGTON FOOTE.	Will	MR. G. KING.
Geoffrey	MR. G. H. SNAZELLE.	Cicely	MISS CLARA PERRY.
Hubert... ..	MR. B. DAVIES.	Dame Margery	MISS MARIAN BURTON.

WHATEVER Dr. Villiers Stanford's inborn function may be, with relation to music, it is certainly not that of a composer of comic opera. He is learned, thoughtful, ingenious, instructive, careful, conscientious ; many other laudatory adjectives are eminently applicable to him as a musician and man ; but he is not funny, nor is he melodious, judging his characteristics as a writer for the lyric stage by the singularly tedious work produced at Drury Lane on the 28th April, under the title of "The Canterbury Pilgrims." Lovers of music wedded to comedy, when allured to a theatre by the announcement that a comic opera is there provided for their entertainment, do not expect to have their spirits crushed by a dull oratorio, or even to be depressed into a frame of mind that recommends penitence and painful maceration to their immediate consideration, rather than enjoyment and harmless mirth. Now "The Canterbury Pilgrims," if it be anything, is an oratorio, and a dismal one at that. I know several oratorios that sensibly surpass it in vivaciousness. "Judas Maccabæus" is livelier ; so is "The Creation ;" so is "Samson." Moreover, there is no oratorio having any recognized claim to public favour—no, not even "Naaman"—that is not far more melodious than Dr. Stanford's so-called "comic opera," which, however, is avowedly an exemplar of "continuous melody"—that is to say, of inorganic fragments of more or less tuneful phrases, spread out thin over deserts of mechanical contrivance, and turned inside out and upside down for the only conceivable purpose of demonstrating what an amazing amount of ingenuity a clever man may waste upon boring his fellow-creatures to the extreme limit of human endurance. Assuming that Dr. Stanford is capable of composing tunes—and I am quite willing to believe that he can do so if it please him—one-tenth of the too manifest labour and pains he

has expended in excluding attractions of that class from "The Canterbury Pilgrims" would have sufficed to convert the work in question into a veritable "Little Warbler" of melodies. Dr. Stanford's adoption of the Wagnerian "method" in connection with comic opera is not likely to render that questionable innovation more popular in this country than it has hitherto become. It is the imitators of the great Saxon Master who retard the full recognition of his commanding genius by servilely aping his fads and mannerisms. Themselves utterly lacking in the force and intellectuality that render even his strangest vagaries interesting, they are unequal to the production of aught but colourless and clumsy caricatures of his vivid and vigorous tone-pictures. Of such laborious and insipid stuff as these feeble mimics spin out by the furlong, "The Canterbury Pilgrims" is a phenomenally tiresome specimen. That it exhibits musical erudition, constructive ability, and an infinite capacity for taking pains, is undeniable. All the worse for its audiences; for these relatively admirable qualities, which, if combined with melodic inventiveness and geniality of style, would generate delightful results, being unsupported and unrelieved by the chief essentials of operatic composition, only intensify the wearisomeness of the work embodying them, besides disclosing in all its rugged aridity the barrenness of the land which Dr. Stanford has vainly striven to fertilize.

"The Canterbury Pilgrims" is as unremittingly contrapuntal as though it were an exercise in thorough-bass specially written for submission to examiners by a candidate for a musical degree. Counterpoint is a good thing, doubtless; but one may have too much of it, as of other good things, particularly in a comic opera. The *leit-motiv*, used in moderation, is an agreeable contrivance; but a three-act work consisting almost exclusively of *leit-motive*, can scarcely fail to fatigue the most receptive and discriminating ear. By inverting these "guiding phrases," and now and then dovetailing two or three of them into one another, the strain upon the listener's attention is agonizingly augmented. The extreme oral watchfulness required for the detection of these phrases, whether insidiously introduced or, so to speak, lugged in by the heels, and for their unravelment, when cunningly intertwined, is wholly incompatible with the pleasure which most people hope to experience when they attend the performance of a comic opera. Such persons, as a rule, do not pay for their places with a view to taking a three hours' lesson in harmony, or to spending a long evening in mathering their brains by guessing subtle musical conundrums. Composers of the "endless melody" and "guiding phrase" school are really a thought too unreasonable in their exactions upon the theatre-going public. Speaking through their works, they seem to say:—"If you imagine that you are come here to be amused, you are very much mistaken. To be instructed, certainly; to be edified, possibly; but to be merely amused—perish the unworthy thought! We had no such frivolous purpose in view as your entertainment when we composed these sublime, ingenious, æsthetic works. On the contrary, what we proposed to ourselves was to elevate your tastes, to cultivate in you the inestimable habit of mental concentration, and to furnish you with opportunities, at a price, of studying problems that we have consumed years in preparing for your consideration. Pay your money and be attentive. You are expected to manifest rapturous

delight with whatever you may think you understand, and deep reverence for such things as may be utterly unintelligible to you. Should the work presented to your notice on these terms happen to be intitled a comic opera, remember that a mere fanciful sprightliness of nomenclature cannot be permitted to influence your attitude towards a grand musical achievement, teeming with continuous melody, and bristling with *leit-motive*. To follow the former patiently throughout all its meanderings, and to stalk the latter with inflexible perseverance to their respective lairs, is your present business, if not your pleasure."

Such is the lesson apparently intended to be taught to the music-loving public by "The Canterbury Pilgrims," to the composer of which opera it does not seem to have occurred for a moment that all classes of society seek recreation, not instruction, at the theatre. Even the well-to-do live at such high-pressure now-a-days—the bread-earning competition is so severe and exhausting, and the reaction of over-strained nerves at the close of the day's work so depressing to the spirits—that the working bees of our vast metropolitan hive, when taking their hard-earned pleasure, require simply to be amused, and in such sort that no tax shall be imposed upon their intellectual energies or resources. Hence the protracted and prosperous reign of operetta, consisting (in plot, dialogue, and music alike) of "easy things to understand." To offer a London audience—and under false colours—a string of learned fugues, laborious canons, and "imitative recitatives," devoid of humour and unrelieved by articulate melody, is, to say the least of it, an untimely and injudicious proceeding. Dr. Stanford is of far too fugal a temper to write successfully for the lyric stage. A bright and gay libretto, like that of Mr. Gilbert à Beckett, is thrown away upon a composer whose musical instincts are of a nature that should prompt him to set words selected from the gloomiest of the Penitential Psalms. This tendency is revealed, with more or less lugubrious results, in every part of his "comic" opera; conspicuously so in his overture, which might congenially preface a sacred cantata illustrating the trials of Job; in his choruses, which are heavy anthems; and in his treatment of comic characters, whose utterances might be regarded as unnecessarily dismal were they enounced by confirmed misanthropes, executioners' assistants, or familiars of the Inquisition. Amongst the more deadly of these dispiriting personages is a dreadful Dame Margery, whose tuneless maunderings more than justify her husband's irregularities of conduct; a noxious Sir Christopher, the husband in question, for whom Dr Stanford has written music that is frequently absurd and always unpleasant, but never for a moment funny; an innkeeping Geoffrey, almost as tiresome and unmelodious as Wagner's Berkmesser; and a vulgarly Mephistophelian Hal-o'-the-Chepe, to whom a vast quantity of jaw-breaking recitative has been allotted, and who is, in my humble opinion, one of the most intolerable bores that ever appeared upon any stage. Mr. Barrington Foote, who struggled manfully with the insuperable difficulties of this terrible part, was much to be pitied. Indeed, all the "principals" of the cast were severely handicapped by the jerky and disjointed character of the recitative, seemingly written with the object of puzzling the singer and inconveniencing the voice. Many passages of the "sung dialogue" are cunningly fashioned

time-traps, wherein the most careful vocalist, not being a human metro-nome, may easily be caught when he or she least expects it. It having been the composer's aim to circumvent and gravel his performers, I was not surprised—as Dr. Stanford is a most skilful and accomplished musical trapper—to observe that even such experienced artists as Mr. Ludwig and Mr. Snazelle now and anon succumbed to his wiles. The lovers' parts of Cicely and Hubert are uniformly tame, chiefly because the music assigned to these young people is altogether lacking in the passion and sentiment it professes to express. An amatory duet sung by them in the second act is an interesting illustration of the art "How not to do it."

"The Canterbury Pilgrims" was produced with a splendour and completeness worthy of a better work. The costumes are historically accurate, the scenery is pretty, and all the accessories are excellent of their kind. Mr. Augustus Harris, who has a genius for stage-management, has done his best for the opera in every way, including the provision (for the *première*) of a fervid and well-disciplined *claque*, which fully earned its *honoraria* and the composer's gratitude throughout the first performance by a profusion of "storms of applause," "enthusiastic recalls," and other gratifying demonstrations that were duly recorded in the newspapers of the morrow. The curtain fell at the close of each act upon those audible, as well as outward and visible, signs of the success that managers and authors only too gladly associate with what is professionally styled "a great go." But I shall be considerably astonished, despite the plaudits of April 28, if the career of Dr. Stanford's comic opera prove a lengthy or remunerative one. It has none of the qualities that constitute what the Germans call a *Zug-Stueck*—that is, a piece which may be counted upon to "draw." It is dull, pretentious, and untuneful; and I am at a loss to understand how so thorough a musician and wide-awake an impresario as Mr. Carl Rosa can have been persuaded to include it in his *répertoire*.

WM. BEATTY-KINGSTON.



Our Play-Box.

"DEVOTION."

A Play in Four Acts, by DION BOUCICAULT, jun. Produced at the Court Theatre, on Thursday, May 1, 1884.

Duc de Chevreuse ...	MR. JOHN CLAYTON.	Balagnier	MR. TRESAHAR.
Comte de Chalais ...	MR. H. B. CONWAY.	Soubise... ..	MR. WALTER RUSSELL.
Abbé de Gondi... ..	MR. D. BOUCICAULT, JUN.	Maubreuil	MR. CHALINOR.
Duc de Moubazon ...	MR. EDMUND MAURICE.	Captain of the Guard.	MR. GERALD GODFREY.];
Aubry	MR. GILBERT TRENT.	Marie	MISS ADA CAVENDISH.
De Fiesque	MR. G. F. BLACKBOURNE.	Geneviève	MISS L. VENNE. ;
De Suze	MR. F. M. PAGET.		

It is, unfortunately for the author of this new play, easily possible to be kept so long waiting for a powerful situation, that by the time it comes our sorely tried patience will hardly allow us to appreciate it, and this is one of the two serious objections which may be brought against "Devotion." The one scene of the play is the last, the scene for which first Volnys and then Félix, in the French "Duel sous Richelieu," bored themselves and their

audiences for the two preceding hours, and even this scene is open to condemnation on the score that the whole interest centres round the husband, of whom, until then, we have scarcely seen anything, and cared even less. The other great fault of the play is that the unfortunate heroine never seems quite clear as to which of the two men, husband or lover, she really prefers. As far as the audience is concerned, it does not much matter which of them it is—she might adore her husband and mistrust her lover, or worship her lover and detest her husband ; but one of the two it must necessarily be in order to create an interest in the unhappy woman for whom sympathy is claimed ; and as she apparently cannot make up her own mind the audience refuses to do so for her, and the result is, that no interest is created at all. The story of the play lies in a nutshell. The Comte de Chalais is enamoured of Marie de Monbazon, and the lady fully reciprocates, but unluckily for the course of true love, the suitor is poor, and her father declines with thanks. He graciously adds that should de Chalais have become wealthy at the end of three years, he may return to claim his bride, but when the young man, having fulfilled his part of this programme, does come back, it is to find Marie the wife of the Duc de Chevreuse. All that now follows is simply to lead up to the final scene. The Duc and the Count are capital friends, save each other's lives two or three times, and altogether conduct themselves far more sensibly than the poor Duchesse de Chevreuse, who, however skilled she may have been in political matters, certainly exercised the minimum of sense as regards her own private affairs ; for she actually goes masked to the Count's lodgings in order to save his life, while the Duke is protecting it still more effectually by fighting the duel himself. Meanwhile the Count, not to be outdone in devotion, has written a love-letter to Marie, which is to be delivered should he die, but when, through the instrumentation of Richelieu, he is obliged to fly from Paris, this letter, with Marie's portrait attached, falls into the hands of the unscrupulous minister, who immediately sends it on to the husband. Now comes the scene for which all the rest has been endured, and Mr. John Clayton proved nobly equal to the occasion. The indifference with which he reads the fatal love-letter, and the sudden and awful changes that comes over the man as he looks at the portrait and recognizes his own wife, were admirably rendered, and Mr. Clayton has rarely acted better than in this scene. His grief seemed literally to be rending him, and yet in all his passion and anguish he is never overstrained, and his acting was of the most powerful description. With the return of de Chalais, all ends satisfactorily, for he, having been wounded by his pursuers, first speaks the important words which bring husband and wife together, and then, as his captors rush in, he promptly dies. That the Marie of Miss Ada Cavendish was a disappointing performance was chiefly due to the intense nervousness from which this lady suffers, for several times her words were unintelligible, and at others her voice quite failed her, but for the Comte de Chalais of Mr. H. B. Conway, only praise can be accorded. It is a decided advantage to this gentleman that in a "costume play" like "Devotion" he can wear his beautiful dresses as though to the manner born, and not as many do, in a painfully "for this night only" fashion, and it is also an advantage to his audience where he does so, for when in velvet and ruffles, Mr. Conway is

apparently no longer afraid to let himself go, and always plays with far more vigour and boldness than when in every day dress. His *de Chalais* is a natural and fervent performance, and between his Count and Mr. Clayton's Duke all honours must be divided, for Mr. Boucicault in no way worked out his own conception of an amorous Abbé, and though Miss Lottie Venne was naïve and amusing, her Geneviève more vividly suggested a masquerading "Betsy" than a lady of the old French Court. The play is splendidly mounted, and all the accessories are so good, that it is almost to be regretted that such a gorgeous dress should have been provided for a play so inevitably doomed to failure as "Devotion."

M. E. W.

"THE RIVALS."

SHERIDAN'S Comedy. Revived at the Haymarket Theatre, on Saturday, May 3, 1884.

Sir Anthony Absolute	MR. A. W. PINERO.	Fag	MR. ELLIOT.
Sir Lucius O'Trigger	MR. ALFRED BISHOP.	Thomas	MR. PERCY VERNON.
Captain Absolute ...	MR. FORBES-ROBERTSON.	Mrs. Malaprop ...	MRS. STIRLING
Mr. Faulkland	MR. BANCROFT.	Julia Melville ...	MRS. BERNARD-BEERE.
Bob Acres	MR. LIONEL BROUGH.	Lydia Languish ...	MISS CALHOUN.
David	MR. C. BROOKFIELD.	Lucy	MISS JULIA GWYNNE.

It may not inaptly be questioned whether any play of modern date demands greater perfection of individual acting than does Sheridan's well-known comedy of "The Rivals," more especially in the present age, when the eccentricities of a Mrs. Malaprop or the absurdities of a Bob Acres would—without the most careful handling—quickly develop into the broadest kind of farce. Each separate character may be regarded as a complete miniature in itself, but little dependent on any counter-aid or assistance, so that the loss must be an irreparable one, when they fail in being rightly understood by their respective delineators.

In its present revival at the Haymarket Theatre, no pains have been spared to portray "The Rivals" with all the embellishments which stage management can possibly devise, and if, from obvious reasons, we are inclined to question the wisdom of such a course of action, we cannot but be conscious of the evident thought and attention which the managers of this most popular theatre have bestowed upon their latest venture.

With all due consideration, however, it must be a source of wonder to the observant playgoer that the commencement of the drama seems so absolutely devoid of life and interest. One might almost look upon it in the light of a prologue, played to all intents and purposes in dumb show, so completely is the main interest of the play subservient to the action of a scene which practically possesses but little interest to the public in general, after a first and, perhaps, cursory glance. The curtain rises with the drowsy voice of the watchman, proclaiming the passing hour, mingled with the distant chiming of a clock. We are treated to some short chatter between Fag and Lucy, and a passing vision of Captain Absolute; then the cry of the watchman is once more heard, the clock again strikes, the curtain descends, and all is over for the time being. Nothing of any importance comes to break the even continuance of the play, until the third act, when a gavotte is somewhat inappropriately the advent of an important scene between Lydia Languish and Captain Absolute. It is a

pity that such should be the case, for this dance is one of the most charming interludes which we have seen on the stage for many a day. One is almost inclined to believe that the figures on the drop curtain have become suddenly endowed with life, so uniformly graceful are the attitudes and groupings of the gaily attired characters.

A prettily set forest scene concludes the old-fashioned comedy, and gives us time to turn our thoughts towards the various artists connected with its present revival. It seems almost needless to say how admirable is the Mrs. Malaprop of Mrs. Stirling, for there can be but one opinion of the way in which this true artist so completely lapses personal identity in the part of this vain, ungrammatical old woman, whose extraordinary vagaries of speech elicit such unbounded applause and merriment. How far this fact is owing to the inimitable style of Mrs. Stirling, who can say? Miss Calhoun as Lydia Languish, falls into a chronic state of exaggeration, which considerably mars the evident earnestness she feels in her work.

Miss Julia Gwynne is but little suited to such a part as Lucy, which recalls to our minds the piquant manner of Miss Kate Phillips in the same character.

Mrs. Bernard-Beere and Mr. Bancroft may be heartily congratulated on so completely divesting the scenes between Julia and Falkland of their monotonous dulness. Greater praise, we think, can scarcely be given them. Mrs. Beere makes a charming picture in her quaint old-fashioned gowns, particularly in that of yellow and white, worn in the minuet. If gracefulness of figure can be increased by beauty of dress, surely nothing more artistic could be found than the one we have just mentioned.

The Faulkland of Mr. Bancroft is most praiseworthy in every respect, whilst Sir Lucius O'Trigger is another of Mr. Bishop's clever sketches in miniature.

Mr. Lionel Brough scarcely appears to understand the life and boisterous fun of Bob Acres, more especially in the opening scenes. But little praise can be given to Mr. Pinero or Mr. Forbes-Robertson in their respective parts of Sir Antony and Captain Absolute.

Seldom indeed has there been such an unfortunate selection as in the case of Mr. Pinero, who from first to last plays in a falsetto voice which becomes tediously monotonous after a while. Strangely enough, also, Mr. Forbes-Robertson seems to possess but little idea of the frank, careless manner of a dashing young officer, consequently the notable scene between him and Mrs. Malaprop becomes on his side somewhat flat and undercoloured.

"MAM'ZELLE NITOUCHE."

Vaudeville, in Three Acts, by HENRI MEILHAC and ALBERT MILLAUD. Music by HERVÉ.
English version produced at the Opera Comique, on Mouday, May 12, 1884.

Denise de Flavigny ...	MISS LOTTA.	First Soldier	MR. ALEXANDER.
Major	MR. ROBERT PATEMAN.	Manager	MR. JOHN PHIPPS.
Celestin	MR. FRANCIS WYATT.	Lady Superior	MISS F. COLEMAN.
Fernand Champlatreux	MR. FREDK. DARRELL.	Janitress	MISS LAVIS.
Loriot	MR. H. M. CLIFFORD.		

"MAM'ZELLE NITOUCHE," written to suit the peculiarities of Madame Judic, and produced at the Variétés, Paris, on January 26 last year, belongs to that class of work which has to be taken as it stands and judged entirely

on its own merits. It has no discernible plot, it tells no story, and its construction is lamentably weak. It claims no serious consideration as a play, for it is indeed nothing more or less than an avowed vehicle by means of which a popular actress can amuse her audience for a couple of hours. This English version of a favourite French vaudeville is therefore the means whereby Miss Lotta can display her ability, her spirit, and her cleverness. In other hands, or with less skilful treatment, its fate would have proved instantaneously disastrous. As it is, Miss Lotta and her companions have to work with might and main, with unceasing energy and vigilant watching, to keep the piece together. The central character of the vaudeville is Denise de Flavigny, or, more properly, Lotta, a girl who is as demure as a saint in the presence of the directress of the convent, and a very bomb-shell of fun, frolic, and devilment when left to herself. The principal sufferer from her mischievous pranks is Celestin, the eccentric organist of the convent, who plays hymns all day and rehearses his comic opera all night. He has to take the young Denise to Paris, and on his way thither he halts at the country theatre to witness the production of his new piece. The principal actress becomes annoyed, refuses, in the middle of the performance, to proceed with her part, and the convent girl steps in and successfully finishes the play. Then follow more adventures equally surprising—and conventional—and Denise finally marries the man chosen for her by her parents, and whom she has unknowingly learnt to love. I must frankly confess that I do not like the odour of such work as this. Did not common sense tell us that such doings as are pictured in the convent, where the scene is mostly laid, were utterly impossible, I should be inclined to question the good taste of such proceedings. Putting religion aside, the piece might still be shorn of much suggestiveness, at no great sacrifice of either wit or labour. Objection may be taken, in particular, to the scene in the third act, where the school-girl is left, with no female companion, in the dead of night, to carouse until cockcrow with a number of officers in their barracks—a scene which, together with the aid of a drunken soldier and an intoxicated organist, considerably jeopardized the success of the piece on the first night. The shortcomings of the dramatists are amply compensated for by the cleverness of Miss Lotta's impersonation. It shows much bright thought, genuine humour, and the ability to thoroughly interest and amuse. Miss Lotta is the life and soul of the piece, and she plays with her accustomed archness, vivacity, and untiring, irrepressible spirit. The eccentric organist-composer is amusingly portrayed by Mr. Francis Wyatt, who will be still better when he has shaken off some of the airs of Dick Swiveller. Mr. Robert Pateman is excellent as a testy old major, and he was of great service to the piece at a most critical moment. Miss Woodworth was capital as the actress who abandons her part in the middle of the play, and Miss F. Coleman was the Lady Superior of the convent. M. Hervé's music is not very brilliant, and it has been found necessary to introduce several additional musical compositions.

"CALLED BACK."

A Play, in a Prologue and Three Acts, and Seven Tableaux, by HUGH CONWAY and COMYNS CARR; founded on the novel of the same name by HUGH CONWAY.

Produced at the Prince's Theatre, on Tuesday, May 20, 1884.

Gilbert Vaughan...	MR. KYRLE BELLEW.	Bolski...	MR. H. CAMERON.
Arthur Kenyon ...	MR. H. J. LETHCOURT.	Markeloff ...	MR. L. S. DEWAR.
Anthony March ...	MR. FRANK RODNEY.	Pauline ...	MISS LINGARD.
Dr. Ceneri ...	MR. G. W. ANSON.	Mary Vaughan...	MISS TILBURY.
Paolo Macari ...	MR. H. BEERBOHM-TREE.	Mrs. Wilkins ...	MISS C. PARKES.
Petroff ...	MR. S. CAFFRAY.	Susan ...	MISS AYLWARD.

IN one of G. R. Sims' shorter poems which deals with the educational crazes of the day, and queries as to their reason, the concluding words are these :—

"Miss Truth replies : ' Why, if you please,
Because they're so sensational ! '"

These lines might be quoted in answer to any surprise which a mere commonplace mind might express as to the enthusiastic reception of "Called Back," which was produced at "The Prince's," on the evening of May 20; for the play is nothing if not sensational. At the time that Kean ruled the boards, our actors gave us stirring stuff, and Shakespeare drew the biggest houses; with a sudden re-action we veered round, the drawing-room comedy and poor Tom Robertson set the new fashion; now, again, we have tired of drawing-rooms and prefer garrets—indeed, so far as our tastes for realism outrun our refinement, that were the fears of our childhood to be realized, and a "real live harlequin" to be cut up piecemeal every night, the play in which this scene occurred would make the fortune of any theatrical manager who produced it. So turns the world, and happy he who can turn with it, for to judge by the first-night reception of "Called Back," it will prove a fortunate venture for both its authors and Mr. Edgar Bruce. In main outline the story closely follows that of the book, and where it differs it is decidedly to the advantage of the play, in which the old nurse who cares for the blind hero, is replaced by a pretty sister, which part is charmingly played by Miss Tilbury. This sister, Mary Vaughan, is engaged to, and shortly marries, her brother's friend, Arthur Kenyon, and thus a new interest is created and proves a success. It is when she and her brother Gilbert are living together that the play opens, and here, at first starting, is an important difference to the story, for Gilbert Vaughan has already met and loved Pauline, whose acquaintance we make when she comes to his house, not knowing that since she saw him he has become blind. This young lady (whose reception of this sad news is hardly compatible with her professed love for Gilbert) is the niece of a certain Dr. Ceneri, who is an important member of an Italian secret society to which she herself belongs, and it is through her consenting to take Gilbert back with her to his uncle's house that occurs the grand scene, which made the book and will make the play. Anthony March, the brother of Pauline, is, in the presence of his uncle and sister, stabbed to the heart by one Paolo Macari, whom he has insulted, and with a piercing shriek the girl falls senseless to the ground at the moment that her blind lover, who has been hiding in the garden, hears her scream and rushes to the rescue. Macari, who wishes to kill him also as a possible informer, is

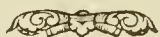
prevented by the doctor, who after a most cursory examination of Vaughan's eyes, vouches for his assurance he is blind, and the curtain goes down on a most effective tableau, leaving Vaughan bending over what he believes to be the dead body of Pauline. So much for the prologue, the first tableau of which might be shortened with advantage, and if Miss Lingard would concede two points, her acting throughout the play would be admirable—firstly, as Bernhardt's angry "Frou-Frou" amply proved, it is not necessary in order to speak clearly to speak with irritating slowness; secondly, that although her audience was ultimately grateful to her for having saving her strength for the final scene, it would be as well if this saving were not quite so palpable in the scene with Macari before her brother's death; when she utterly failed to rise to the splendid acting of Mr. Beerbohm-Tree. At the beginning of the drama proper, Gilbert has recovered his sight, and is bent on hunting down the supposed murderers of Pauline, knowing them to be Italian conspirators; to this end he joins their band, and a meeting is arranged in a garret in Soho. Thither Gilbert and his friend Kenyon repair, for the latter, in a chance encounter with Ceneri, has recognized in him the uncle of the dead Pauline, and this clue is eagerly followed up; meanwhile the recognition has been mutual, and before Gilbert reaches the rendezvous, Ceneri and Macari (who in spite of his professed friendship is a political spy) have decamped together leaving Pauline behind them. On her lover's arrival he recognizes in her the girl he has mourned as dead, and with his discovery that that awful night's work has bereft her of reason, the curtain again falls. Act 2 was the best from an artistic point of view, for the reason that it gave his finest opportunity to Mr. Beerbohm-Tree, whose acting of Macari was incomparable. Nothing would have been easier than to caricature this part part by an over-accentuation, or, on the other hand, nothing would have been easier than to weaken it by a too conscious self-restraint, but from both these perils Mr. Tree steered clear, and the result was a most polished piece of acting. In this tableau "the black lie" is spoken which sends Vaughan off to Siberia in vindication of Pauline's honour, and in the next we find him amongst the mines in search of Ceneri who has been condemned through the instrumentality of Macari. Mr. Anson (Ceneri) who in this scene both in voice and manner proved his admiration of Shiel Barry's "Gaspard," was an unconscionably long time dying. The authors had set down the fact that Ceneri was to relieve Vaughan's mind by telling him that the murdered man was Pauline's brother and not her lover, and then that he was to die; but, unfortunately for the audience, they forgot to say how long he was to be doing it, and the result was, that the very scene where the agony was to be especially piled up fell very flat indeed. However, he dies at last, and the last act is soon over. Macari steals back to the Kenyon's villa in order to carry off Pauline by main force (for he has loved her throughout, and only told "the black lie" for the sake of wounding the Englishman who won her from him), but unluckily for him his plans are thrown out by the sudden return of Pauline's reason, which is somewhat miraculously aided by a still more miraculous vision, and by her agonized cries for Gilbert. Gilbert, having returned from Siberia, is naturally close at hand, and we finally leave these faithful

lovers in each other's arms, while Nemesis, in the shape of a brother conspirator, meets the treacherous Macari as he turns to leave them.

Had Mr. Kyrle Bellew never had the (for him) questionable luck of seeing Mr. Henry Irving, his Gilbert Vaughan might strike one as more original and less of an imitation, but as it is that end is certainly not attained. His present impersonation is very harmonious, very graceful, but also very colourless, and this chiefly arises from the Irving polish he has given to his own acting, which would be clever enough if he would only let well alone. As it is it is far too melodramatic.

As this notice started with a quotation, so shall it end with one, from "Called Back" itself, for it may be taken as eminently descriptive of the play. Powerful it is, very in some places, original always, spun out, yes, sometimes very much so; but as a whole the play may be summed up in a few words, Kenyon speaks to Gilbert: "My boy" he says, "it is morbid, very morbid indeed."

M. E. W.



Our Omnibus=Box.

A PART from all question of personal feeling and sentiment, the mind of the most casual observer can scarcely fail to be surprised at the lack of poetry and idealism which so eminently characterizes the greater number of the pictures now being exhibited at Burlington House. The fact, however, cannot claim to be one of recent date. As the years come and go, we find ourselves wondering how it is that even our greatest artists choose, as it were, to immortalize by their genius the most trivial and commonplace incidents of every-day life, rather than to portray those exquisite beauties art and nature which are within the reach of all those who will but seek for them.

The question—though one of no little import to the public in general, whose minds are ever willing to appreciate the poetry as well as the prose of life—can scarcely be solved by any single individual. Therefore let us for a few moments linger over those pictures whose beauty of thought and execution cannot fail to be most heartily and warmly appreciated.

Foremost amongst these must be placed the "Cymon and Iphigenia" of Sir Frederick Leighton, a study of human nature, full of such exquisite sentiment and romance, that the eye may well be forgiven for turning again and again towards a work, which by many will not inaptly be considered as one of the finest which the President of the Royal Academy has as yet given to us. Taken, however, as a representation of the well-known legend, the picture cannot claim to be wholly satisfactory. Cymon, the wild, uncultured savage, is here portrayed as a beautiful youth, whose soft, dreamy eyes are fixed upon the sleeping form of Iphigenia with an expression wholly at variance with that of awe-stricken wonderment which must have entered his heart when, wandering through the woods, in rough, boorish

fashion, he comes across such an exquisite vision of womanly beauty, that his thoughts are instinctively carried back to a purer and nobler life than that which he has hitherto led. One cannot help regretting that such should be the case, for in consequence we not only cease to recognize the wide gulf of civilization which stretches between this man and woman; but the outward contrast of physical as well as of mental grace is completely done away with.

With regard to the poetical way in which the subject has been treated it would be difficult to speak in terms of too high praise. The crouching forms of the woman and child, wrapped in peaceful slumber, seem completely to be thrown in the background by the exquisitely ideal beauty which envelops the principal figure. Clad in pale yellow draperies, which more express than hide the gracefulness of posture into which she has thrown herself, Iphigenia rests in deep unconscious sleep. The soft white arms are twined round a head encircled by golden hair, which, falling lightly on a face of perfect womanhood, leaves untouched the marble whiteness of the throat and neck. The whole pose of the figure is one of complete abandonment to the power of sleep, which transforms the face into a poem of womanly beauty in its purest and loveliest aspect.

Let us now turn towards a scene which will delight the hearts of those who love the absolute peace of country life. The picture by Mr. Leader, entitled "The ploughman homeward plods his weary way," shows us how truly the poetical mind can appreciate and understand the simplest, though not the least exquisite, beauties of Nature. The rosy light of the evening sun sheds its beams on the village church as upon the pools of water in this country lane, along which some rustics are guiding the trusty steeds, who, it may safely be surmised, are longing for the rest which has been so well and hardly earned.

So graphically is this lovely scene of idyllic life placed before our eyes that we almost seem to hear the cackling of the geese as they are driven by the careful housewife across the common towards their shelter for the night, which is slowly but surely descending upon the land. Nature is relapsing into the calm sleep, so gently to be broken on the morrow by the song of the lark soaring up into the clouds; but who would not desire to linger over the beauty of the twilight hour as Mr. Leader has here depicted it?

Wholly different are the thoughts which arise in our minds as we stand in front of the picture by Mr. Schmalz, entitled "Too Late." How appropriate is the title only those can say who, placing themselves in the position of this stalwart warrior, enter into the chamber of a girl who rests in the sleep which knows no awakening.

Above her head is the altar, upon whose shrine lie clusters of deep red flowers, illumined by the faint gleam of a tiny lamp. This, however, is gently subdued by the grey light of the morning which is slowly breaking over the distant hills. How lovingly it rests on the motionless figure robed in pure white, upon the fair young face touched by the remorseless hand of death, and finally on the lilies which strew the ground in reckless profusion. At the foot of the bed crouches the weeping form of a woman exquisitely draped in greyish blue. At the head sits an old friend or long-trusted servant, his blank, tearless gaze speaking more than volumes of words.

Just behind him is a little golden-haired maid, whose soft eyes are turned upon the stranger with a wondering look, which shows that she is as yet scarcely conscious of the sorrow in whose presence she is standing. There is, however, a fault, and a grave one, to be brought against Mr. Schmalz's work as regards the figure of the warrior, which is not only lifeless in expression but weak in attitude. We look in vain for the agonized sorrow which would have inevitably convulsed the man's features at such a moment, neither does it seem probable that his eyes, as in the present instance, should be turned towards the distant horizon rather than on the face of the dead. His first and most natural impulse would undoubtedly have led him to draw nearer to the sleeping form and judge for himself the truth of the dread tidings which have so wrecked and ruined his life. Had his attitude been so depicted, we venture to affirm that the dramatic power of the picture would have been most advantageously heightened and increased.

As regards originality of thought, coupled with perfection of detail, the "*Mariage de Convenance*," by Mr. Orchardson, must be singled out for marked approbation. Who is not able to place themselves for the time being in the position of this husband and wife, surrounded by every luxury that money can buy, yet as miserable in their relative positions as two people can well be. She, with sullen face and scornful manner, has pushed her chair from the dinner-table, and is now regarding, with a look of mingled contempt and indifference, the quiet, undemonstrative man opposite her, whose mind at the present moment seems to be wholly engrossed between private reflection and the wine which the grave, circumspect-looking butler is pouring out for him. The picture is well worthy of especial notice if only to recognize the labour of time and thought which has been so liberally bestowed upon the minutest detail.

"*A Fen Farm*" exhibits the same poetry of feeling and subject which so eminently characterizes the work of Mr. Macbeth. This country lassie calling to her cows is a charming study of girlhood in its brightest and happiest aspect.

The present collection has its usual amount of portraits, the greater number of which are scarcely likely to prove a source of any peculiar interest to the public in general. Foremost, however, among the exceptions is the portrait of Mr. Irving, by Mr. Millais, who may be warmly congratulated on having given us a very pleasing likeness of a most attractive face. Mr. Oules has been scarcely as fortunate in that of Mr. Bancroft, which is over constrained in expression and posture.

It is with great regret that I have to chronicle the death of Madame Taglioni. This famous dancer was born, in 1804, at Stockholm, where her father, Philippe, who was of Neapolitan origin, was engaged as chief dancer at the theatre. On journeying to Vienna he was accompanied by his young daughter, Marie, who made her first appearance on the stage on June 16, 1822, in an elaborate ballet arranged by her father. Her success in Vienna was great and instantaneous. Five years later she was engaged, at a large salary for those days, at the Opera House, Paris, where, on July 23, 1827

she made her *début* in the Ballet de Sicilien. She was quickly offered an engagement for five years at £320 per annum, and after the French Revolution of 1830 she received £3,200 a year. From Paris she went to the Imperial Theatre, St. Petersburg, and then to London, where at the King's, afterwards known as Her Majesty's Theatre, she appeared in 1829. Her shawl dance in "La Bayadère," and her aërial flights in "La Sylphide" soon won for her the title of the "Déesse de la Danse." It was in the ballet of "La Sylphide" that, on June 26, 1845, she re-appeared in London. The lessee of Her Majesty's Theatre was Mr. Benjamin Lumley, who projected the famous "Pas de Quatre."

Having at his command the services of four such celebrated *danseuses* as Marie Taglioni, Carlotta Grisi, Cerrito, and Lucille Grahn, Mr. Lumley determined to avail himself of such material for a brilliant ballet. After many difficulties, these four artistes in the now lost art of dancing were brought together in one ballet, and the 'Pas de Quatre' became the rage of London. Its equal in popularity has never been known, before or since. It became, literally, an European event, and it formed the culminating point in the history of the ballet in England. In his delightful "Reminiscences," Mr. Lumley has given some idea of the excitement it caused:—"The varied excellencies of each *danseuse* were warmly and eagerly canvassed in every club, at every dinner, in every ball-room. From the palace to the shop-counter, the "pas de quatre" was the great topic of the day, to the exclusion of every interest, however serious. The excitement crossed the Channel. Foreign papers circulated histories and descriptions of its wonders. Foreign Courts received, along with official despatches, accounts of its extraordinary captivations." This account may sound to modern ears like a fairy tale, but we can form no idea, from living examples, of the glories of the past in the matter of stage-dancing. In the days of Marie Taglioni, Fanny Ellsler, Carlotta Grisi, Cerrito, Lucille Grahn, Adèle Dumilâtre, and the rest of that brilliant galaxy, the poetry of motion was understood and cultivated. Dancing was then an art, and not, as now, too often a vehicle for the display of shapely limbs and incompetence.

Soon after her appearance in the "Pas de Quatre," Taglioni was married to the Count Gilbert de Voisins. Of the union two children were born, a daughter, who married the Prince Troubetzkoi, and a son who became an officer in the French army. Through the Franco-Prussian war, in 1870, Madame Taglioni lost her large fortune, and in 1878, she was compelled to establish herself in London as a teacher of dancing and deportment. She remained here until 1882, when, at the urgent request of her son, Count Gilbert de Voisins, her residence was fixed in Marseilles, where, on the morning of Thursday, April 24, this illustrious dancer terminated her chequered career.

Marie Taglioni was one of those fairies of the past our grandfathers and fathers used to rave about most enthusiastically. Personally of her I know nothing, but the Comtesse de Voisins, that most charming witty

old lady, it has been my privilege often to meet. Her memory was bright and fresh to the last, and for the amusement of those around her, she would recall many and many interesting incidents of her career. She used to allude to her tour in the English provinces as one of the happiest times of her life, though she and the others had mostly to rough it. In one small town the stage was so diminutive, that in a "Pas de Trois," when they had to hold hands in a line, she was the only one who appeared entirely ; of each of her companions only one-half could be seen from the front. Taglioni's great delight was to see Scotch dances danced by Scotchmen. At a soirée a few years ago, some ladies were talking of the necessity (?) of having so many dresses when you go much into society. Taglioni smiled : "I will tell you what I did when I was a young girl," she said. "I was going to spend two months with my brother, who was settled in Vienna, and when I arrived, found he had numerous invitations to evening parties for me. I was very young, like you, my dear young ladies, and you can guess how delighted I was. We used to go out almost every evening. When the time came to return to Paris, my brother said to me, 'I want to ask you a question, Marie ; I did not notice your luggage when you came. How many boxes have you?' 'One.' 'Impossible ! why you have been wearing a new dress every night.' 'Come and see,' I answered, and taking him into my room showed him two white muslin dresses. 'This is my whole wardrobe.' He looked incredulous ; 'my maid has changed the ribbons each time, and they all go into one band-box.' 'But,' added Taglioni, 'you must not think people were indifferent to fashion in those days. I well recollect that when my sister-in-law met me on arriving, she stared at my bonnet, *the* last new thing in Paris, laughed outright and said, 'How very ridiculous you look, my dear, . . . can you get me one like it?'"

A few days after this conversation she sent the following letter to one of the young girls who had asked her for her autograph :—

"La beauté n'a pas besoin de ces parures exagérées qui la rendent ridicule, et la plus adroite des femme est celle qui s'habille simplement parce qu'elle fait ainsi comprendre qu'elle possède cœur et esprit.

"Vous avez les deux qualités, Mademoiselle, chacun se plait à le reconnaître et votre modeste petite robe faite par vos mains, vous a attiré de sincères hommages ; continuez à être aussi charmante pour faire le bonheur de ceux qui savent vous aimer.

"Veuve Comtesse, GILBERT DE VOISINS,

"Née MARIE TAGLIONI."

Few people know that to Marie Taglioni, the queen of dancing, who had received the most splendid jewels from all the crowned heads of Europe, the one gem she prized above all others during the whole course of her life, was one little leaden ball, which had wounded her son in the Franco-Prussian War, and which, after it was extracted, he had made into a brooch for his mother.

Many readers of THE THEATRE will be glad to have their attention called to a sale of exceptionally interesting books and papers relating to

the stage and dramatic history, which will take place during the present month at the rooms of the well-known auctioneers, Messrs. Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge. The collection was formed by the late Frederick Latreille, a gentleman who throughout a long life took special interest in all matters connected with the drama and dramatic literature. Mr. Latreille possessed exceptional qualities as a student of the dramatic art and as an accomplished critic also, and these caused him to collect around him a large amount of interesting material, among which there will be found some hundreds of the old quarto plays of great interest, and in many instances, of considerable rarity. There are playbills also, which form a consecutive history of the principal London and other theatres for more than a century and a half past, all chronologically arranged and in admirable preservation. In these latter the names of the great actors of the past will be found constantly occurring. Garrick, Clive, Barry, Henderson, Siddons, Kean, and other glorious stars of a past generation. A copy of "*Geneste*," enriched on almost every page with Mr. Latreille's MS. notes, has been bequeathed to the British Museum, we understand, with some other kindred property. The actual date of the sale is not yet announced, but it will take place before our next number can be in the hands of our readers.

Mrs. Dutton Cook, widow of the late distinguished dramatic critic and novelist, will give a morning concert at Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, on the 5th of June. Mr. Toole has undertaken to give a recitation and Mr. George Grossmith a musical sketch on the occasion; but the entertainments generally will be of a more purely musical character. Among the vocalists taking part in the concert are Miss Mary Davies, Mdme. Isabel Fasset, Miss Hilda Wilson, Mr. W. H. Cummings, Mr. Arthur Thompson, Mr. W. Winch, Mr. Isidore De Lara, Mr. Frank Quatremayne, and Mr. W. H. Brereton. Mrs. Dutton Cook will preside at the pianoforte, supported by Herr Strauss on the violin, and Signor Pezze on the violoncello. The conductors will be Mr. Walter Macfarren, Mr. Hamilton Clarke, Mr. W. Ganz, and Mr. Wilhelm Coenen.

A ready response has been made to Mr. Godfrey Turner's appeal in his paper, on "*Show and its Value*," last month, for information concerning the music written and adapted by Mr. J. L. Hatton, for Charles Kean's revival of "*Henry VIII.*," at the Princess's Theatre. Not only does Mr. W. A. Leggatt, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, organist at St. Mary's Catholic Cathedral there, and musical director of the Tyne Theatre, supply the wished-for intelligence, to the effect that all this music—the charming and learned overture, the entr'actes, the dances, and Hatton's own setting of the song, "*Orpheus and his Lute*," as a duet—was published by a firm now represented by Messrs. Ashdown and Perry, but he courteously sends a complete set of the pianoforte arrangements. These dainty reminiscences show Hatton in the true light of a profound musician, and a loving archæologist of music. "*The Merry Little Fat Grey Man*" has flung himself heartily into the reign of Elizabeth, and mingles with the choice spirits

and boon companions of that earnestly humorous time. Of course, you know, he *would*, you know: he's just about the age!

On May 1, an extravaganza, founded by Mr. Horace Lennard on Moore's "Lalla Rookh," was produced at the Novelty Theatre, where "Nita's First" is still running to crowded houses. The burlesque is extremely laughable, and the fun is never coarse. The music, by Mr. P. Bucalossi, though not very striking, is well executed and fills its purpose. The heroine finds a charming representative in Miss Kate Vaughan, who looks enchanting, and who is allotted time for one of those graceful dances in which she has no rival. The poet-king and lover, Aliris, is admirably impersonated by Miss Minnie Mario, who plays with much spirit. The fun of the play is principally sustained by Mr. Harry Nicholls, who is very comical as Fadladeen. Mr. Nicholls is duly provided with a funny topical song, which is encored several times nightly. The three scenes painted by Mr. Henry Emden are capital, and are adroitly worked on the small stage. The dresses are magnificent and effective.

Miss Lucy Buckstone, whose photograph appears in this number of THE THEATRE, is the daughter of the late John Baldwin Buckstone. She made her first appearance on the stage as Gertrude in "The Little Treasure," at the Croydon Theatre; and then accompanied her father and the late E. A. Sothern on a provincial tour, in the course of which she acted the following characters at the Dublin Theatre Royal:—Florence Trenchard, in "Our American Cousin;" Lucy Dorison, in "Home;" and Ada Ingot in "David Garrick." It was in the latter part that, on December 26, 1875, she made, at the Haymarket Theatre, her first appearance in London. During the following year she played, at the Lyceum Theatre, Annette in "The Bells," and Lady F. Touchwood in "The Belle's Stratagem." In October of the same year she played Lucy Ormond in "Peril," at the Prince of Wales's Theatre. On her marriage, in 1879, to Mr. H. E. Smithes, she retired temporarily from public life. Miss Buckstone returned to the stage in December, 1882, making her re-appearance at the Olympic Theatre, as Alice Verney in "Forget-Me-Not." She subsequently played, at the same house, the following characters:—Bertha de Motteville, in "A Great Catch;" Gladys Grant, in "Rachel;" and Abigail Hill, in "The Queen's Favourite." She next appeared at the Prince's Theatre, as Edith Marsland in "The Private Secretary." In the forthcoming revival of "Our Boys" at the Strand Theatre, Miss Buckstone will act Violet Melrose.

Mr. Frederick Leslie, the popular actor-singer, who has just returned to play Ollendorf at the Alhambra Theatre, after a brilliant success in America, and whose photograph we give in this number of THE THEATRE, sends some brief reminiscences of his career:—

"Like all young actors, I take great delight in collecting and preserving press notices—good ones, of course; the bad ones I can always rely upon receiving or having my attention drawn to by friends—so, if you will allow



"We know what we are, but know not what we may be."

HAMLET.

Lucy Buckton



"My first appearance in this Theatre."

Frederick Leslie

me, I will dip into my well-papered album and record my doings, good and bad, of my professional career up till now. *Place-aux-Amis*: I made my first appearance in February, 1878, at the Royalty Theatre, as Colonel Hardy, in 'Paul Pry.' This was an eventful performance for the prompter, who was accorded an unanimous call, *and took it*, in place of your imperfect disobedient servant. Later on I tried to play Sir Anthony Absolute to the Mrs. Malaprop of Mrs. Stirling and Bob Acres of Mr. Edward Terry, at the Globe Theatre, without accessories, and have no hesitation in repeating the general opinion expressed on that occasion—that I was the worst ever seen up till that time, and, in my own opinion, up to the present. On the other hand, for my performance of Sir Peter Teazle—remembering I was but twenty-five years of age—at the same theatre, I called forth several eulogiums, amongst which was the following: 'Mr. F. Leslie shows himself so good a Sir Peter that the doubt whether the capacity to play the part would not be lost with one or two actors now no longer young is now removed.' Success attended me in the portrayal of a purblind senile character in Offenbach's 'La Fille du Tambour Major' at the Alhambra; in Don José in 'Manteaux Noir' at the Avenue Theatre; and Rip Van Winkle in Planquette's romantic opera at the Comedy. Of this performance an American critic writes in an American journal: 'The statement may strike you as a form of sacrilege, but it is none the less a fact, that Mr. Jefferson, in his best and strongest day, never gave a better interpretation of the Kaatskill vagabond than that made known here by Mr. Leslie.' I am now playing General Ollendorf in the 'Beggar Student' at the Alhambra. After reading the foregoing remarks, it may not surprise you to know that I was born on 'All Fool's Day,' 1855, and am consequently twenty-nine years of age."

Mr. Leslie has also played the following parts:—The Marquis, in "La Petite Mademoiselle;" Faust, in "Mephistofele II.;" and Briolet, in "Jeanne, Jeannette, and Jeanneton." His efforts in comic opera during two recent visits to America—"where English actors are so hospitably received and treated"—were rewarded with appreciation and offers to return, one proffered engagement being to play lead with Miss Mary Anderson. But we can ill afford to lose this clever young actor, and London will always give him a welcome.

"The Bitter Cry of Outcast London." A performance in connection with the Mansion House Fund, was given at St. George's Hall, on April 26, "The Heir-at-Law" being the play chosen. Mr. John Denby and Mr. E. Gordon Taylor again took the parts of Daniel Dowlas and Dick Dowlas. I noticed their performances last July when the Momus Amateurs gave this comedy. They have lost nothing of their excellence; if there is any change it is for the better. Mr. John Denby imbues the old chandler with just the right amount of vulgarity without over-doing it, and is natural and consistent throughout. Mr. E. Gordon Taylor has the gift of varied expression; his play of features is excellent, and many amateurs might take notice of him for his ease of movements and gesture. Dr. Pangloss was, on this occasion, entrusted to Mr. Frank Lindo, who gave

an amusing rendering of the part; but it was not pompous enough, and the quotations if said in a drier manner would have been more effective. Mr. Arthur Collins was a good Zekiel Homespun, but was put in the shade by the recollection of Mr. H. N. Dickson's rendering of the same part, this last-named gentleman being in the cast and giving a first-rate bit of acting as Kenrick. Mr. Fred Newton and Mr. L. W. Webster deserve a word of commendation as Stedfast and the Waiter. Miss Eva Collins was a slightly exaggerated but good Deborah Dowlas. Caroline Dormer was undertaken by Miss Mary Brown. I should like to give a bit of friendly advice to this lady, who is a very good actress in her line, and that is not to attempt sentimental characters: they are quite unsuited to her. Miss Ivan Bristow was a charming Cicely Homespun, but she might have been a trifle more rustic. The hall was crowded.

Mr. A. G. Pritchard gave some of his clever musical sketches at a concert at St. James's Hall, on April 28. A performance so free from vulgarity and exaggeration, and yet intensely funny and comical, is pleasing to witness. Mr. Pritchard is an excellent mimic, his "Death of Nelson," as sung on board ship with interruptions of the fog-horn, has an exceedingly ludicrous effect.

"The Ladies' Night" of The Moray Minstrels is always brilliantly attended. Princes' Hall has seldom been more crowded by fair ones than on May 10. There was likewise a good muster of the stern sex. The Morays, under the direction of their excellent conductor, Mr. John Foster, did themselves full justice. Among the best pieces was "Flow, Limpid Stream." It is a pity Pearsall's melodious and charming strains should be set to words so unfitted for singing. "What though thou waft it to the foaming main" is indeed a most trying combination of words for the vocalist. Brahms's admirable, if not strictly religious, "Ave Maria" was well rendered. Schubert's "Chorus of Spirits," Sullivan's "The Long Day Closes," and Cusins's "Venetian Boat Song," were sung with all the care and finish such excellent compositions deserve. The guests fully appreciated the treat given to them.

The G. E. M. Amateur Dramatic Club gave a performance at St. George's Hall, May 6, in aid of the funds of St. Saviour's Hospital for Cancer and Nervous Diseases—the plays being "A Household Fairy" and "Randall's Thumb." I sincerely regret that the imperative necessity of being present elsewhere prevented my reviewing this performance.

The readers of THE THEATRE will no doubt be interested to know when the late Miss Adelaide Newton first appeared on the stage. It was at St. George's Hall, on August 8, 1868, when Mr. D'Oyly Carte's Opera di camera, "Dr. Ambrosias, his Secret" was performed privately, it being a *soirée d'invitation*. The *libretto* was founded on "Tom Noddy's Secret," and the cast was as follows:—

Mabel	MISS JESSIE ROYD.	Captain Ormond ...	MR. DENBIGH NEWTON.
Linda	MISS ADELAIDE NEWTON.	Dr. Ambrosias ...	MR. M. S. SKEFFINGTON.
Philip	MR. WALLACE WELLS.		

Miss Adelaide Newton's voice, though uncultured at that time, already possessed great richness and compass. Miss Newton was the original Ida in "Two Roses." She married Mr. Thomas Thorne, the popular manager of the Vaudeville Theatre. I regret to add that she died at Monte Carlo, on April 18.

Miss Cowen's admirers and pupils were in full force at Steinway Hall, May 13, when this talented lady gave her Dramatic Recital. A fair sprinkling of clever amateurs were also present, and the applause was hearty and sincere. Mr. F. H. Cowen supported his sister by presiding at the piano; the vocalists being Miss De Fonblanque and Mr. Bernard Lane. This gentleman chose a song from "Nell Gwynne," and F. H. Cowen's "The Old and the Young Marie." Mr. Bernard Lane has a very pleasing voice, but he seemed to suffer from a slight hoarseness. Miss De Fonblanque was also heard in two songs from one of our most rising English composers—F. H. Cowen. "Lullaby," especially, is one of those musical poems, which ought to be called a duett for voice and piano. It was interpreted with much taste by Miss De Fonblanque, and suited well her pure, fresh voice. Steinway Hall is unfortunately not favourable to the speaking voice, and it is doubly to be regretted when a lady of Miss Cowen's ability is in question. Some parts of "Bertha in the Lane," by E. Barrett-Browning, were not always audible—a real loss to the listeners, for this piece was given with intense and true feeling. "The Tetterbys," from Charles Dickens, proved Miss Cowen's versatility. She displayed a quiet appreciation of fun which told with good effect. "The King's Tragedy" (James I. of Scots, 1437), D. G. Rossetti, exhibited great dramatic power and fire; and "The Jackdaw of Rheims" received such admirable treatment, and showed such a quaint sense of humour, that it sent every one home delighted. Miss Cowen has a valuable quality—she is earnest; and her delivery conveys to the listener the idea of spontaneity, not that of over-study. This is true art.

Theatrical civilization is fast spreading over the world. The following is an extract from a letter just received from Colombo, Ceylon:—"We had a great fête in January, got up in honour of Sir William Gregory, an ex-governor, who is still in the island on a visiting tour. The decorations and illuminations, which were all in the native style, and got up by the Mudligars, or native aristocracy, were well worth seeing. There was a ball at which the mixture of Europeans, 'Burghers' (descendents of the old Dutch and Portuguese) and swell natives, was very curious. Outside the ball-room, in one part of the grounds, we had 'Romeo and Juliet' *performed in Singhalese* by a native troupe, also a Singhalese comedy, and a Devil Dance in other parts. The latter was well worth seeing. The devils had long hair and projecting teeth about four inches long, their bodies painted in a hideous fashion. The contortions they went through with yells and incessant tom-toming made them look like veritable fiends, and the whole time they were brandishing torches, with which some of them occasionally got their hair on fire." "Romeo and Juliet" in Singhalese!

Who will talk of Shakespeare being a failure after this? I regret that the writer does not go into details, for it must have been a curious performance. I should like to have witnessed acting so thoroughly untrammelled by tradition, and noted the eastern reading of our great poet. Here is a new field for American critics.

The many friends of Mr. Henry Irving and Miss Ellen Terry will find much entertainment in Mr. Joseph Hatton's chatty volumes, "Henry Irving's Impressions of America," published by Messrs. Sampson Low & Co. The new memoir of Mr. Irving, written by Mr. Frederick Daly, and published by Mr. T. Fisher Unwin, is an agreeable supplement to Mr. Austin Brereton's more elaborate biography of the actor.

Our readers will like to have before them the full text of a remarkably eloquent speech, spoken most admirably by Mr. Wilson Barrett, in the new play, "Chatterton," by Mr. H. A. Jones and Mr. Herman. It created a profound impression:—

"What's the use of poetry?"

"CHATTERTON. What's the use of poetry? Why, to live upon, when one can't get bread and cheese; to clothe and warm oneself with, when one is ragged and cold! What's the use of poetry? To keep faith and hope and worship alive in the heart of man, to reconcile him to life, to make him at home in his world. What's the use of poetry? To pour vitriol on deceit and vice, to seam and scar the detested face of hypocrisy and lies. To add hate to all things hateful, and shame to all things shameful! What's the use of poetry? To give beauty to beauty, more grace to grace, more truth to truth, to deck the flowers of the field. To rain perfume on the rose and music on the nightingale. What's the use of poetry? To be a stumbling-block to the worldly-wise and the proud, and a camp and pillar of fire to children and the childlike. What's the use of poetry? To embalm the immortal dead, to interpret this aimless universe, to snatch the secrets of the stars, to unleash the seas and the winds, to fling a double rainbow of hope and glory across the heavens, till all the universe shouts with one voice, and beats with one heart, and pants with one breath! What's the use of poetry? To make this wide world drunk with its loveliness, to make this garret a palace and me the King of Death and Fate! Poetry not real! not useful! It is you who are not real, you practical people—you herd of money-grubbers, you bats, you owls, you moles, you human vegetables, who root yourselves, and fatten up your dull, petty, miserable lives, and eat and drink and sleep, and buy and sell and toil, in one long round of humdrum death-in-life! It is you who are not real. You were dead and huddled into oblivion before you were born; you do not live at all; you are smoke from the nostrils of death. Poetry not real! not useful! There is nothing useful but poetry, and nothing real but the poet!"

This very interesting play "Chatterton" was produced too late for review in this month's THEATRE. It shall be fully noticed next month.

The following notes concerning the early career of Mrs. Alfred Wigan will be read with interest :—

Leystone Villa, St. Michael's Road, Stockwell, S.W.
May 22, 1884.

SIR,—The following may be interesting to readers of THE THEATRE :—

The first appearance of the late Mrs. Wigan was in a monkey part at the Old Lyceum, on July 17, 1818. The once famous pantomimic drama "La Perouze," was played there for the first time, and we find in the cast "Chimpanzee, Miss L. Pincott"—her mother, Mrs. Pincott, playing Umba, and T. P. Cooke, La Perouze.

Mrs. Pincott, who was afterwards Mrs. Field, and subsequently Mrs. Usher (wife of Richard Usher, the pantomimist), was well known as a performer in serious pantomime. On Nov. 21, 1825, she appeared for the first time at Drury Lane as Umba, and continued at that theatre two or three seasons—her brother, James Wallack, being stage-manager, and Usher, clown in the Christmas pantomime. She was then called in the bills Mrs. Field. The name of Miss Pincott first occurs at Drury Lane, Dec. 8, 1826, as Clara, in "The Adopted Child," and occurs at intervals down to the date mentioned by Mr. Palgrave Simpson, but always without an initial, and may have referred, as I am inclined to think, not to Mrs. Wigan, but to her elder sister Elizabeth.

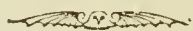
In May, 1830, Mrs. Usher and two younger daughters, Miss Usher and Miss C. Usher, were playing at Bath. I have a letter signed "Leonora Field," written at that time to Penley, offering the services of the trio for the ensuing season at the Richmond Theatre, in which she writes, "I am a sister of Mr. Wallack."—I am, Sir, your faithful servant,

WM. DOUGLAS.

Our learned musical critic, Mr. Beatty-Kingston, sends the following paragraph too late for the "Musical-Box," so I give it a place here :—

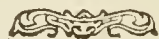
Mr. Isidore de Lara has written several beautiful songs of late, one and all entitled to the highest rank amongst compositions of their class of the present day, in this or any other country. One of them in particular, a setting of some passionately amorous words by Mr. Clement Scott, is, in my humble opinion, a *chef d'œuvre*. The warmth and tenderness that animate Mr. Scott's subtly suggestive verses have manifestly struck a responsive chord in the breast of the gifted composer, who has wedded the poet's rapturous reminiscences of "Last Night" to strains that exercise a strange languid fascination upon their hearers. Such a song as this is the offspring of the heart as well as of the brain, and places its author *en rapport* with all those musical natures in which reason, prudence, and worldly wisdom are subordinate to temperament and sensibility. "Last Night," despite its obvious spontaneity, is constructed with masterly ability, and exacts no small measure of executive proficiency from the accompanist as well as the singer. I have seldom experienced keener and completer pleasure than whilst listening to Mr. De Lara's rendering of this admirable composition. The musical readers of THE THEATRE will, I believe,

derive unmixed gratification from the study of three other songs by the same composer, recently published by Messrs. Chappell and Co., under the titles of "Twin Souls," "At Rest," and "Where Memory Dwells," each a musical gem in its way. "At Rest," is a brief but exquisitely tender dirge, appealing irresistibly to hearts that have "loved and lost;" "Where Memory Dwells" is a scarcely less touching tone-picture of a vision suggesting itself to a troubled and sorrowful spirit; and "Twin Souls" is a fervid love-song, the words of which (by Mr. Howard Deazeley) appear to have been inspired by the theory of "elective affinities," whilst the music glows with all the fire of earthly love. Mr. De Lara is a Minnesinger by instinct and conviction; what he depicts to us in sound is the reality, not the affectation, of amatory passion; in him the artistic faculty of expression is fed and prompted by deep and genuine feeling.



Life's a Bubble.

L IFE'S a bubble, so men say,
See, joy's sunshine falls upon it;
Trust no future, grave or gay,
He's a fool who reckons on it.
If time past be full of care,
Why then now give way to sorrow?
We can't put things as they were,
Nor place them as they'll be to-morrow.
This, at least, is in our power,
Spite future ills, spite troubles past,
To enjoy the present hour,
And strive to make its pleasures last.
Then the past will brighter prove,
Gilt with memory's choicest rays,
And glad thoughts of joy and love
Light us through all future days.



JOHN HOWELL
IMPORTER
SAN FRANCISCO





